the weekly standard

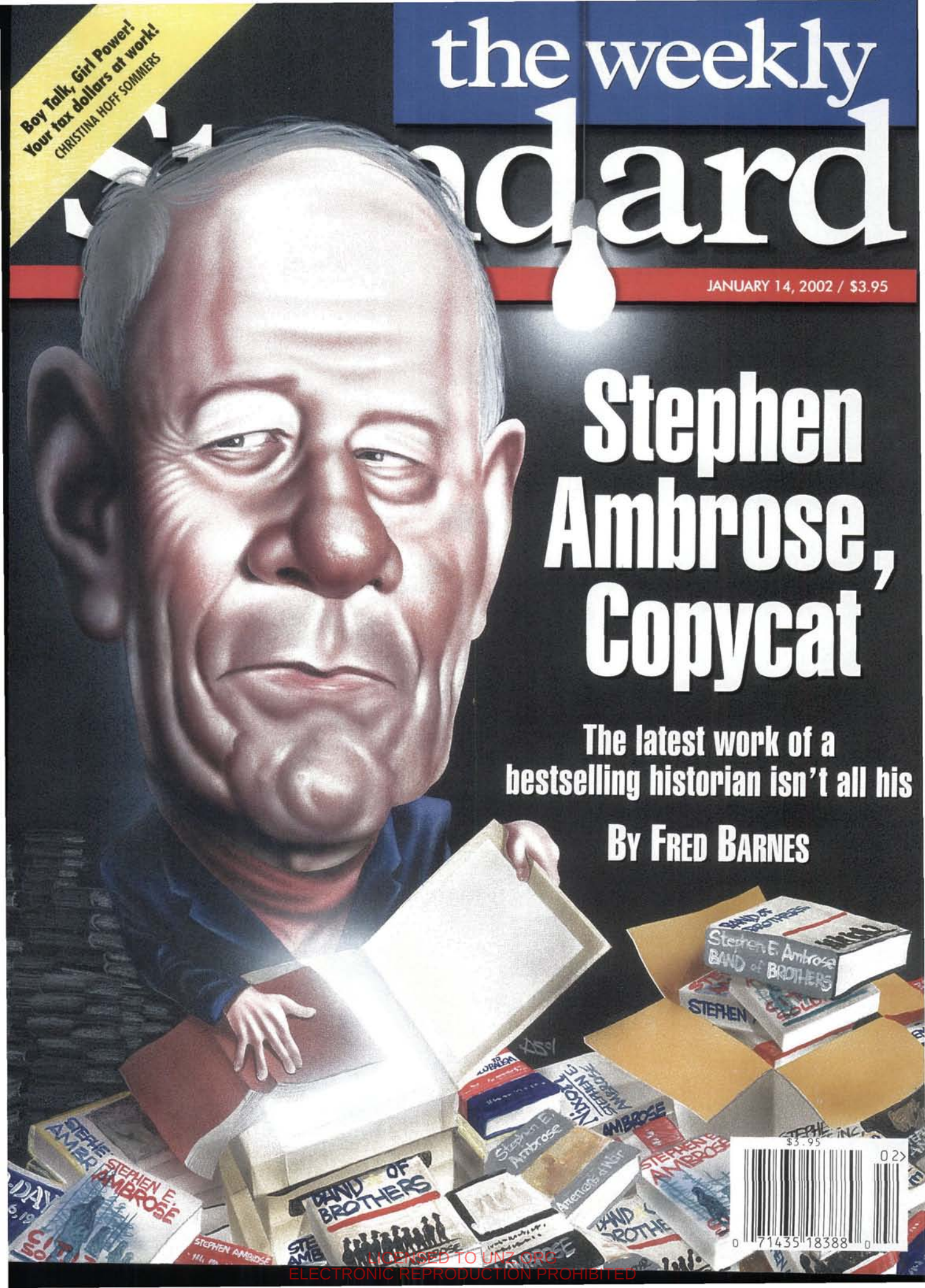
JANUARY 14, 2002 / $3.95

Boy Talk, Girl Power!
Your tax dollars at work!
CHRISTINA HOFF SOMMERS

Stephen Ambrose, Copycat

The latest work of a bestselling historian isn't all his

BY FRED BARNES



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The public is saying:

"No more Drug War!"

A recent Ridder/Braden opinion poll in the state of Colorado shows:[1]

73% of voters believe we should decrease criminal penalties for possession of small quantities of drugs from a felony to a misdemeanor and spend the money saved on prisons to increase drug treatment and prevention.

85% believe the current war on drugs addresses the symptoms of drug abuse but fails to solve the underlying causes.

83% of Colorado voters believe we are losing the war on drugs.

A November national Zogby Poll indicated:

61% of the America public opposes arresting and jailing nonviolent marijuana smokers.

67% oppose the use of federal law enforcement agencies to close patient cooperatives where medical marijuana is legal under state law.[2]

In the last three election cycles the public has approved fourteen state wide reform initiatives!

Why won't Congress listen?

[1] Ridder/Braden, Inc. July 2001. More information: contact The Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, POB 1156, Boulder, CO 80306. See: http://www.prison-moratorium.org.
[2] Zogby International, December 2001. More information: contact the NORML Foundation, 202-483-8751.

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the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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The Torch Burns On

"Thank God." Those were the words of Senator Robert Torricelli last week after federal prosecutor Mary Jo White announced she would not indict him for campaign finance violations—in this case, good old-fashioned bribes stemming from contributions to his 1996 Senate campaign.

In a post-September 11 political climate that has shifted rather dramatically in favor of Republicans, Washington Democrats clutched onto the Torricelli news with particular relief. They believe Torricelli, long considered one of the Senate's most vulnerable Democrats in 2002, will now breeze to reelection.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle says his confidence in Torricelli was "justified" by the decision not to indict, and a spokesman for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee predicted an "overwhelming" victory for The Torch next November. They may be right. Republicans have not yet found a serious candidate to challenge Torricelli. And, perhaps not surprisingly, the New Jersey Democrat has built himself a sizable campaign account—about $3 million some 11 months out.

But wait! Federal prosecutors have referred the case to the Senate Ethics Committee where, with the past as our guide and a one-seat Democratic majority, we can no doubt expect a prompt and thorough investigation of the very serious charges against Torricelli.

Can't we? After all, Senate Democrats have been the chief advocates of tighter campaign finance restrictions, the ones so popular with editorial writers. And many of the facts in this case are not in dispute.

Consider: David Chang, a New Jersey businessman, pleaded guilty in June 2000 to giving Torricelli $53,700 in illegal campaign contributions. In addition, Chang has testified that he gave Torricelli "three or four" Rolex watches, a large-screen TV, Tiffany's cufflinks, and ten Italian suits.

Several New Jersey store owners have corroborated Chang's claims, and a former Chang employee says she once delivered an envelope filled with cash to the senator.

So what did Chang get in return? According to several reports in the *New York Times*, Torricelli in 1999 actively supported Chang's attempt to buy a South Korean insurance company, worth an estimated $1.5 billion. Torricelli, the *Times* reported, wrote letters on Chang's behalf to top Korean officials.

And on at least one occasion, Torricelli "brought Mr. Chang along to an official briefing in Seoul in 1999 in order to lobby" the South Korean finance minister on Chang's behalf. According to the *Times*, "the U.S. ambassador later apologized for Mr. Torricelli's actions."

In the unlikely event that the probe gets serious attention from Ethics Committee chairman Harry Reid, who donated $500 to Torricelli's legal defense fund, Torricelli has a ready-made excuse: The gifts—which Torricelli has never directly denied taking—came from a friend. Congressional ethics guidelines let politicians accept gifts from friends. That argument might get a little complicated, as Torricelli's lawyers have lately taken to calling Chang a "pathological liar."

But this is Washington, where people are often friends with pathological liars, especially ones with money. ♦

To Heck with Him

Last week, Christopher Caldwell penned a brief account for our website (*weeklystandard.com*) of the affair of Walid Shater, the Arab-American Secret Service agent who was booted off American Airlines Flight 363 in Baltimore. Shater was bound for Dallas, where he was to join George W. Bush's security detail at the president's Texas ranch.

Shater claims he was racially profiled. He has been in contact with the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which has lodged a complaint against American Airlines. His lawyer says Shater will sue unless the airline apologizes and gives its employees anti-discrimination training. The president gave conditional backing to Shater, telling reporters, "If he was treated that way because of his ethnicity, that will make me madder than heck."

The pilot responsible for Shater's ouster says he found irregularities in the paperwork that agents must fill out if they seek to board an airplane armed. The pilot and other American Airlines personnel say that, when asked to leave the plane, Shater became "very hostile," made "loud, abusive comments," and threatened, if he were not let on the plane, to use "the powers of the White House."

This last, if true, is the most troubling aspect of the whole affair. For an armed agent of the Treasury Department to demand access to an airplane by claiming to be acting with the authority of the White House, as if he were some American-style *Tonton Macoute*, is an offense to citizens of a free country.

Whether someone with a hair-trigger willingness to resort to civil-rights grievance suits is the best person to

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defend the chief executive is open to debate. Whether it's okay to bully one's way onto an airplane, using threats of presidential reprisals, is not. If Shater indeed acted in such a way, his spending a single minute more in the president's employ would make us mad as heck. This is, in any civilized scheme of values, a firing offense.

Regardless of the particulars, the president's "mad as heck" remark was unfortunate. If his frequent demands for vigilance since September 11 have been more than rhetoric, then this vigilance should *start* with allowing pilots a say-so over who gets to board planes, especially if they're armed and their paperwork isn't in order. If, on the other hand, such security measures are to be our third, or sixth, priority, well down the list from assuaging the hurt feelings of prickly Secret Service agents, the president owes it to air travelers to tell them so. ♦

A Whiter Shade of Pale

Washington, D.C., is a famously sensitive city when it comes to race—recall the firestorm when a city bureaucrat used the word "niggardly." But last week's *Washington Post* may have set a new standard for artful racial euphemism. In a piece relating how Michael Jordan's return to the Washington Wizards is sparking an economic revitalization among the bars and restaurants around the team's arena, the MCI Center, reporter David A. Fahrenthold clearly wanted to say that Jordan's presence has brought more wealthy whites to downtown Washington.

Instead, the piece describes how businesses once did better on nights when the Capitals, the hockey team, were in town: "Largely suburban, jersey-wearing, SUV-driving hockey fans made good customers before and after the game." The Wizards' followers, though, tended to be "light-spending fans, who ate on the cheap and took Metro home." The newly minted Wizards fans, on the other hand, are "the expense-account crowd." They are "the khaki-wearing cocktail crowd" that "spends well and looks good."

C'mon, David. You can use the W-word. ♦

Thomas Silver, RIP

Conservatives lost a good man and a serious thinker when Tom Silver, president of the Claremont Institute, passed away at age 54 on December 26. Silver wrote the definitive work rehabilitating Silent Cal, *Coolidge and the Historians*, described by President Ronald Reagan as one of his favorite books. Silver, a Vietnam vet, later served as chief of staff to Los Angeles County supervisor Mike Antonovich before taking the helm at the Institute. He was a proud proponent of American ideals the way the Founders fashioned them, and worked tirelessly in support of those principles, both in government and in the intellectual world. He will be missed. ♦

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Casual

Tater Tots

Epiphanies are rarer in life than in literature. But they do occur, those moments when everything changes in an instant, when you know your understanding of the world will never be quite the same. I had one of those this summer, when I saw my first potato cannon.

We were in Maine, visiting friends who live in a rural area up the coast. It was early evening, cocktail hour, and we were sitting on the back porch watching the kids play in the grass. "Hey," said my friend, "want to shoot the potato cannon?" Minutes later he emerged from the barn with the thing in hand: four feet of white plastic PVC plumbing pipe, capped at one end. On the underside was a red button, an igniter taken from a gas barbecue. Using a ramrod, he forced a baking potato down the barrel. Then he unscrewed the back of the pipe, sprayed a shot of Aquanet hairspray into the combustion chamber, and closed it back up. He handed it to me. I pressed the button.

As it turns out, Aquanet (like Right Guard underarm deodorant, and a number of other grooming products) is made with propane. Compressed and ignited, propane explodes. Like a 10. gauge shotgun. Flames leapt from the muzzle. The potato flew about half a mile before I lost sight of it. The report was tremendous. The dogs hid. I was in love.

"That's nothing," said my friend. "Wait till it gets dark. We'll cut open a lightstick and pour it on the potato. It's like a tracer round."

Obviously I needed a potato cannon. It wasn't difficult to find. The Internet is home to a thriving potato cannon community. Overall, it's a group with creative instincts, subversive tendencies, and the free time to combine them. If it explodes and you can imagine it, you can find it online, often with blueprints. Within 15 minutes, I came across spud pistols, propane-propelled tennis ball guns, vegetable mortars with car battery igniters, as well as actual potato *cannons*, with wheels.

I liked the fan pages best. On *Spudgun.com*, a guy named Dave Malis posted a photograph of himself "shooting toilet paper soaked in Coleman lantern fuel." Just down the page, Nathan Lovern, no hometown listed, is pictured in his undershorts cradling a PVC bazooka the size of a telephone pole. "Well I've completed the Big One," he writes. "It KICKS like a mule!!!!!! It knocked me back about a foot. I used about 15 seconds of White Rain hairspray and shot a plastic bottle full of powdered Kool Aid. It went about 300 yards and hit a tree and exploded!!!!! It was awesome!!!!!! I've got to come up with some cheap ammo."

After a bit more searching I wound up at *Spudtech.com*, official site of the Spudgun Technology Center. Spudtech is the Bell Labs of the potato cannon industry. A few years ago, its engineers created the SP9004, a remarkable device, billed (no doubt accurately) as "the world's most advanced hand held laser-guided bolt-action aluminum potato rifle."

Tempting. In the end I settled for a conventional plastic model with a rifled barrel. Spudtech shipped it to my house in a week for under a hundred bucks, no permit necessary. In 1998, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms released its official position on potato cannons. Spudguns don't qualify as "firearms," the ATF said, "provided that they are used solely for launching potatoes for recreational purposes." As long as it's a hobby, the feds are fine with it. (Go pro, and there's paperwork to fill out.)

Apparently my neighbors feel the same way. They haven't complained yet. And they've had plenty of opportunities. What happens if you fire a lime point-blank at a stockade fence? We now know. What about an apple? How about marshmallows? All experiments we've conducted in my backyard. (For the record, potatoes remain the most effective projectile food. Apples are too mushy. Marshmallows tend to melt in the barrel and clog the rifling.)

A couple of Sundays ago, my kids and I decided to test our marksmanship. We made a bipod out of two-by-fours to steady our aim, and painted a target on a stump. The first one to hit the center with a potato got ice cream.

I'm embarrassed to say, I didn't do well. My first shot missed entirely. So did my son's. (I hit a tree, he knocked a hole in the fence.) Both of the girls did better, but it was our youngest, the 2-year-old, who prevailed. She hit the bull's-eye dead on. The center of the stump disintegrated. She was thrilled, and so were we. In the end, we all got ice cream.

Tucker Carlson

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Pain in the Daschle

As usual, Fred Barnes provides an outstanding analysis of Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's strategy to thwart President Bush's domestic agenda ("The Majority Leader's War," Dec. 24). Daschle's stating that Democrats believe that "While George Bush is popular, voter doubts are close to the surface" is particularly revealing.

One must wonder whether Democrats are seriously overplaying their hand. Democrats were moderately successful in spinning doubts about Bush to voters during the 2000 presidential campaign, falsely portraying him as a mediocre boob propelled to success only through his father's political connections.

The president's high approval and popularity ratings show that his powerful leadership and masterful decision-making during the war on terror have dispelled the public's doubts about his intellectual and managerial capabilities. Perhaps Bush's detractors believe they can convince voters that politics "stops at the water's edge," that he has performed with near-genius in the war, but will magically become a twit once more when the focus returns to the domestic agenda?

Christopher M. Schnaubelt
Santa Maria, CA

So Senator Tom Daschle is a highly partisan Democrat! Fred Barnes had me rolling.

For eight years Republicans did everything they could to destroy the Clinton presidency. Subverting the efforts of a popularly elected president not only distracted Congress during that period, but hampered the functioning of the executive branch as well. But all Republicans are "true-blue" patriots and everything they were doing was in the interest of the American people, right?

Now we have Senator Daschle's obstructionism. Republicans deserve a dose of their own medicine.

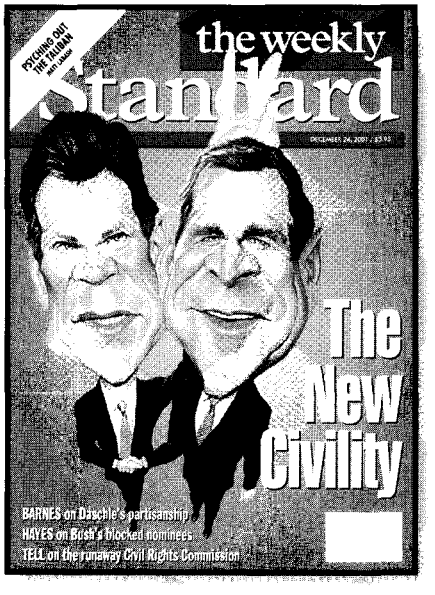
It is fine to say that President Bush is doing a good job executing the war. But please remember it wasn't just President Clinton who made us unprepared to deal with the tragedy of Sept. 11; the Republicans helped him right along.

So if Daschle is giving Bush a sour stomach, well, he's the opposition party and he's supposed to do that. Democrats for all their incoherence have one thing up on the Republicans: They simply can't adopt that "herd" mentality very well.

Steve Naidamast
Washington, DC

Something About Mary

Way to tell it, David Tell. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has obviously long been a farce, a sham, and a personal tool and stage for Mary Frances Berry's racist views ("Berry Bad Behavior," Dec. 24).



Hopefully we'll soon see the end of Berry's rule, and the commission if it continues to exist will be legitimized by her removal. It might then be able to do some worthwhile work on the subject of racial tension, which so many black racists have been determined to prolong and worsen, at everyone's expense.

Ken Pruitt
Lawrenceville, GA

I am repulsed by David Tell's editorial "Berry Bad Behavior." Tell apparently finds it appropriate to label anyone with whom he disagrees a terrorist. In the opening paragraph of his rant, he lauds the Bush administration for its "decision to forgo a military tribunal in favor of regular federal district court proceedings against Mary Frances Berry," and later he refers to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights as a "radical cell." Throughout the article, Tell uses language (in jest, it appears) comparing Berry to al Qaeda terrorists.

Regardless of one's opinion of Berry and her leadership of the commission, she is obviously not a terrorist. Using such language is not just a cheap and ridiculous rhetorical tactic: It trivializes real terrorism, and it insults the victims of terrorism.

John Fitzgerald
Chicago, IL

A Few Good Rules

Although I concur with David Tell's defense of the president's order regarding military commissions, I strongly disagree with his condemnation of the extant military justice system ("Tribunals on Trial," Dec. 17).

I know something about courts-martial, having served for more than 15 years as an Air Force judge advocate.

Although the military law code is not without fault, it is a far cry from being the grim "bane of civil libertarians" Tell describes. No doubt there are egregious exceptions to the norm, but Tell discredits not only the myriad judges and military members who have honestly and faithfully served as court members without regard to any repercussions their verdicts may have on their own professional lives, but also most of the commanders who convene those courts-martial.

I am confident that honest reporting about military commissions, why they are both legitimate and necessary, and the distinction between them and courts-martial will ensure that neither is besmirched.

Michael Cunningham
Annapolis, MD

Runaway Train

Stephen Moore's "Scamtrak" (Dec. 24) presented many worthwhile reasons for ending Amtrak's fiscal inefficiency, but the alternatives to bailout

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Moore suggests have no basis in fact.

"Break up the Amtrak system into discrete, independently operated lines," Moore writes. He continues, "Under this plan, the government would still own and maintain the tracks and the rest of the physical infrastructure . . ."

Except for much, but not all, of the northeast corridor and a few other locations, Amtrak (the government) does not own any tracks. Railroads own them. Would a privately run passenger rail service provide some private sector operator a means to profit underwritten by freight railroads?

What are needed are railroad operators to run the railroad. Such persons would know how to maximize Amtrak's efficiency and, importantly, rid the railroad of political interference. This is unlikely to happen, and Amtrak will never turn the corner on its own. Politicians have a corner on that corner.

JOHN F. O'CONNOR
Berlin, NJ

RING IN THE NEW YEAR

LIKE J. BOTTUM, I too was wary of seeing the new film *Fellowship of the Ring*, the third attempt to make a film version of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* ("Tolkien, the Book," Dec. 31/Jan. 7). I can reassure him, however, that very little is lost from the book to the movie, except for the compression required by a movie treatment.

The "thickness" Bottum fears will be lost is there in the characterizations of the separate races: The elves are elfish and the dwarves dwarfish in the Tolkien sense. No detail has been overlooked in bringing the spirit of the book to the movie. The staff of Saruman the wizard is even a highly finished machine product while Gandolf's is made of gnarled wood. The sadness that characterizes the book, the elegiac tone and sense of inevitable diminishment is strongly played in this movie version. This is definitely not a fairy story to take your children to.

Tolkien's astonishing literary accomplishment of turning a childlike story about a hobbit and a dragon into an epic of our age has confused the literary critics who only perceive that Tolkien's masterpiece is not modernist, and who think it is too literal and too moral to be taken seriously. But then, the critics of their day thought Shakespeare and Dickens were too popular and their literary virtues too obvious to be worthy of serious consideration.

In any case, should J. Bottum see *Fellowship of the Ring*, he will not be disappointed.

JOHN CAIAZZA
Nashua, NH

A VERY KERMIT CHRISTMAS

SPEAKING OF Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, J. Bottum writes, "You don't get much of that narrator's voice in the films we've all seen," and he mentions three ("The Ghost of Christmas Past," Dec. 24).

I would recommend that Bottum, if he would consider such a humble candidate, take a look at *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, made in 1992. It preserves, I think, as much of Dickens's wry, twinkle-eyed voice as can be expected.

EMLEN SMITH
New York, NY

HAT HEAD

I APPRECIATE Joseph Epstein's essays that turn up in THE WEEKLY STANDARD. I must, however, point out a small misuse of language in his recent essay, "A Walker Outside the City" (Dec. 17).

Epstein says he passed "an older man wearing a Cubs hat." The man wasn't wearing a Cubs hat. He was wearing a Cubs *cap*.

A hat is a constructed article (e.g., a fedora or bowler), usually made of felt and steamed, pressed, and formed on a block to shape it. A baseball cap is a soft, unconstructed article stitched together from several pieces, with a visor added.

JACQUELINE EDWARDS
New York, NY

TRUST IN THE BALANCE

IN HIS REVIEW of the books by Plantinga and Wolterstorff on the revival of Christian philosophy ("Calvin and Hobbes," Dec. 24), Thomas Hibbs praises the "tilting of the balance away from doubt and back to trust."

However, people place their trust in a variety of agencies and authorities; trust by itself never provides a basis for thinking that something is true. For that, the agency trusted needs to be reliable, which gets us back to the use of evidence, science, and other rational procedures. Therefore the tilting back towards trust alone accomplishes nothing.

Incidentally, the picture of Alvin Plantinga that accompanied Hibbs's review shows a man who is stern and censorious. But let me assure WEEKLY STANDARD readers that Alvin Plantinga is amiable and jocular, personality traits displayed in his writings as well as in his person.

CHARLES LANDESMAN
Professor Emeritus
Hunter College and CUNY Graduate School
New York, NY

WHIPPING BOY

I ENJOY THE WEEKLY STANDARD, but I wanted to point out an error in the Dec. 24 issue. In "Behind Hollywood's Lines" by Stephen Schwartz, Scott O'Grady is called a Navy lieutenant, but he was an Air Force captain.

The Navy has had our own share of such incidents and does not need to take credit for those of our Air Force colleagues.

LT. CDR. ROBERT MAGUIRE
USN Commanding Officer
Bad Aibling, Germany

• • •

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the weekly Standard

A Moment to Be Seized

Has September 11 fundamentally changed the nation's political landscape? The common view among political consultants seems to be that it hasn't. Democratic pollster Mark Mellman, appearing at a Hudson Institute event on January 3, argued that though change is more exciting than continuity, continuity has been more common in the past and is more likely in the near future. The war probably won't have a partisan impact in either direction, he said. The issues that dominated the past few years—the economy, health care, education, and so on—will likely end up dominating 2002, and, for that matter, 2003 and 2004. This echoes the sentiments expressed three weeks earlier by Karl Rove, the president's top political adviser, at an American Enterprise Institute gathering.

Can this really be true? The nation suffers a horrible trauma. The rules of normal politics are suspended. A war of a new kind is launched. The president's approval ratings shoot up to 90 percent and hover near there for at least four months. And in the midst of all this, we are supposed to believe that national politics will come to rest at approximately the same place it was before?

The professionals reach this conclusion because they study a certain set of data. If you ask voters what issues are important to them, they list things like health care, education, and jobs—pretty much the same concerns they had before September 11. Fear of terrorism, which topped the list for a while, is fading—and isn't obviously partisan in its implications. Hence, the pros see domestic stability underneath the foreign policy drama.

But there is history here that contradicts the continuity thesis. Do most national traumas leave the nation unchanged? The Oklahoma City bombing sucked the air out of the Gingrich revolution, giving Bill Clinton the upper hand. The Iran hostage crisis guaranteed that the 1980s would be unlike the 1970s; Americans wanted a more assertive set of policies, abroad and at home. The Kennedy assassination meant that the 1960s would be unlike the 1950s. A senseless act of violence, it loosed passions and energies that played out in unexpected ways. It thawed issues that had been frozen. On a larger scale, World War I brought the Progressive era to an end and heralded the quite different politics of the 1920s, just as World War II quenched the activism of the New Deal.

Through it all, Americans continued to care about the fundamental things: education, health care, jobs. But politics was dramatically different, nonetheless.

The war on terrorism may well have a similarly large effect on American politics. And there are data that support this view. For the past forty years, faith in government has eroded. In 1960, three-quarters of Americans said they trusted government to do the right thing. By the mid-1990s, only one in five said that. Now faith in government has skyrocketed, with over half of all Americans expressing confidence in government. Similarly significant majorities tell pollsters that the country is on the right track—despite the recession.

Those numbers will fall a bit, but what they indicate is real. They indicate self-confidence. The American people now have confidence in their fundamental institutions: in the military, in the presidency, even in Congress. These and other institutions have seen their ratings soar.

A person with self-confidence is different from a person without self-confidence. So is a nation. It may not have moved right or left. It won't necessarily have changed its priorities. But it has changed along another dimension. It has enlarged the scope of its aspirations. It dreams on a different scale. A self-confident nation believes it can control its own destiny. It assumes that if it launches an initiative it will be able to complete it, so it is more prone to launch new initiatives. When it starts down a road, it does not allow itself to be paralyzed by the commentators who warn that the path ahead leads to a quagmire.

September 11, the public reaction to September 11, and the progress of our arms in Afghanistan may well have made the country more daring. Americans used to regard power and politics as marginal. Now the voters are like a man suddenly aware of his muscles, looking around for something to use them on, some cause to contribute to.

That restlessness would be pernicious, if channeled in the wrong direction—into a Great Society pipe dream, say. But if the energy were challenged intelligently, then it could lead to the sort of constructive activism we saw dur-

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ing the Civil War, during the first Roosevelt administration, and during the Reagan administration.

In other words, this is a moment to be seized. The party that seizes it can break the 49-49 deadlock that has gripped American politics of late.

The debate in Congress is stale and unserious. Certainly the congressional Democrats are showing no signs of fresh thought. Witness Tom Daschle's January 4 economic policy speech. In keeping with the wisdom of the political pros, Daschle spoke as if there were a hermetically sealed membrane separating foreign policy from domestic policy —and Bush were a saint when it comes to the former but a demon when it comes to the latter.

The arguments Daschle proceeded to sketch out on domestic policy were a subtle but thoroughgoing insult to the intelligence of the American voter. He spent the first half of his speech attacking Bush's tax cuts as fiscally irresponsible. But he did not go on to call for their repeal. Instead he listed a long string of further tax cuts and spending programs he wants to pile on top of the Bush cuts. Some of the spending programs would be quite massive. For example, he envisions a subsidy to compensate workers who are hurt by free trade agreements, or who think they are hurt, or whose congressmen think they are hurt. Daschle concluded by calling his massive package of tax cuts and spending programs a return to fiscal discipline. This really is an affront to the memory of voodoo economics. If you are going to pose as an advocate of balanced budgets you shouldn't shamelessly promote a plan that will increase deficits.

But the decadence of Daschle's speech is testimony to the way the whole debate on fiscal policy has deteriorated as it has become less consequential. (Is there anybody in America who actually thinks a stimulus package proposed at this late date will do anything to stimulate us out of recession?) There is so much posturing on these matters because there is so little at stake. Basically, the Democrats are saying the United States should devote 1 percent more of its GDP to domestic programs, while the Republicans want to return the same 1 percent to the voters via tax cuts. Is this really the debate that will launch the 21st century? It's puny compared with the country's aspirations.

It's not hard to think of some bigger concerns. How in an age of high-tech affluence do we inculcate character in the young? Is there more to life than maximizing health and minimizing pain, no matter the moral boundaries that are crossed on the way? That's the question the cloning debate raises. Can America remain comfortable within its borders while the entire Arab world languishes under tyranny? Wouldn't it be wise to try to bring democracy to that region?

It will be interesting to see whether in his State of the Union address George W. Bush steps up and seizes these big issues. Will he use this moment to try to create a new political alignment? If he follows the polls, he won't. He'll just return to a compassionate conservatism designed for the political landscape that existed before September 11—and already fading back then. But if there is one thing the president has demonstrated in this crisis, it's that he is by instinct a leader, not a man, like his predecessor, who follows the polls. Here's hoping.

—David Brooks, for the Editors

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Iva Toguri, aka Tokyo Rose

Innocent of Treason

Everything you've heard about "Tokyo Rose" is wrong. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

TREASON TRIALS are in the air, as U.S. authorities seek a solution to the case of John Walker Lindh, the Taliban fighter from Fairfax, California. Predictably, misinformation is rife, with amateur experts weighing in on a topic most Americans have enjoyed the luxury of ignoring for the past 50 years.

Stephen Schwartz is completing a book entitled The Two Faces of Islam.

But Article III, section 3 of the U.S. Constitution is both inclusive and specific in its definition: "Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." Two witnesses or a confession in open court are required for conviction. Assisting the Taliban gun in hand, with many witnesses, should be enough to qualify John Walker Lindh as a traitor.

While the nation awaits a decision in the "Caliban" case, three World War II treason trials have returned to public attention. Max Haupt, resident of Chicago, was the father of Nazi saboteur Herbert Haupt. The son was convicted by a military court in 1942 and executed. The elder Haupt was found guilty of harboring his offspring, knowing he intended to commit sabotage, but the parent was spared execution.

The case of Tomoya Kawakita was more distasteful. American born, Kawakita went to Japan in 1939 to visit relatives and stayed, though without renouncing his U.S. citizenship. Once he returned to the United States after the war, he was identified as a brutal tormenter of American prisoners and found guilty of treason in 1952. His death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

The third case was that of Iva Toguri d'Aquino, widely though misleadingly known as "Tokyo Rose." Her 1949 trial for her role in wartime broadcasts on Japanese radio is a study in irresponsible journalism more than in the application of laws against treason. D'Aquino was the victim of an outrageous injustice.

Iva Toguri was an American who went to Japan in the summer of 1941 to visit a sick relative. She was a graduate of the University of California and spoke no Japanese. Trapped on the wrong side of the Pacific after Pearl Harbor, she was pressured by the imperial authorities to take Japanese citizenship but firmly rejected that option. She was refused evacuation from Japan. Though the U.S. government would not confirm her citizenship, the Japanese considered her an enemy alien.

Because of her loyalty to the United States, it was difficult for Toguri to get work in wartime Japan, but eventually she was hired as an English typist at Radio Tokyo.

There she encountered a group of

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Allied prisoners of war, who had been ordered to broadcast in English under threat of death. They included an American, Captain Wallace Ince, a Filipino, Lieutenant Norman Reyes, and an Australian, Major Charles Cousens. Cousens refused to work on the radio until ordered to by a fellow prisoner who was a superior officer. The group was assigned to "Zero Hour," a program limited to entertainment. Ince, Reyes, and Cousens subverted the broadcasts by including satirical references that the Japanese would not understand but Allied combatants would recognize.

Iva Toguri went to work on "Zero Hour" but declined to serve as an announcer until persuaded by Cousens. Once she started broadcasting, she identified herself on the air as "Orphan Ann." She would always insist she never made anti-Allied remarks. Nevertheless, she was labeled with the moniker "Tokyo Rose," a generic nickname applied by Allied servicemen in the Pacific to any number of women who broadcast music and light commentary on Japanese radio, some of whom also read propaganda.

Not one of the scripts for "Zero Hour" was written by Toguri—or d'Aquino, as she became after her marriage to the Japanese-Portuguese Felipe d'Aquino—and none of the prisoners of war who worked with her was effectively prosecuted after the war. (Ince was never charged, and although Cousens was tried in Australia, the proceeding was quashed.) Yet d'Aquino got caught up in a nightmare.

The nonexistence of any single "Tokyo Rose" did not faze two writers for the Hearst press: Clark Lee, a newspaper reporter, and Harry Brundidge, a writer for *Cosmopolitan*. These two traveled to Japan after the surrender and learned that of dozens of American-born staffers in the Japanese radio services, d'Aquino was the only one who had refused to renounce her U.S. citizenship. In a bizarre irony, this affirmation of allegiance to the Stars and Stripes left her vulnerable to a charge of treason if it could be shown she had knowingly broadcast anti-American statements. Lee named d'Aquino "the one and only Tokyo Rose" in a piece for the *Los Angeles Examiner*. Brundidge prevailed on the American military authorities in Japan to arrest her, but she was exonerated after a full U.S. Army investigation. The U.S. Department of Justice sustained her innocence.

After her release from military detention in 1946, d'Aquino had only one wish: to get home to Los Angeles and start a family. That was her undoing. Radio personality Walter Winchell caught wind of her attempts to return to the United States and pilloried her as "Tokyo Rose." Brundidge returned to the chase; he went back to Japan and extorted her signature on a fraudulent "confession." She was then indicted for treason by the Justice Department and flown to California to stand trial.

Of dozens of American-born staffers in the Japanese radio service, d'Aquino was the only one who had refused to renounce her citizenship, which left her vulnerable to the charge of treason.

The American Civil Liberties Union and the Japanese American Citizens League refused to touch her case, which was taken up by an extraordinary civil liberties champion, an authentic liberal named Wayne Mortimer Collins. Collins had represented the plaintiffs in three challenges to the wartime relocation of Japanese Americans (*Korematsu*, *Hirabayashi*, and *Endo*). He represented d'Aquino pro bono, with assistance from a conservative Republican named Theodore Tamba and a labor lawyer of occasional Communist sympathies, George Olshausen.

Ince and Cousens appeared as witnesses for the defense, along with numerous Allied veterans who testified that "Orphan Ann" had played popular music and indulged in disc-jockey chatter with no propaganda content. The jury was deadlocked 10-2 in favor of conviction, but was ordered to reach a decision because of the high cost of the proceeding.

Finally, d'Aquino was cleared on seven of eight counts, and found guilty only on count six: that she had broadcast, in the fall of 1944, the approximate words "Orphans of the Pacific, you really are orphans now. How are you going to get home now that all your ships are sunk?" D'Aquino denied ever saying this; Cousens denied including it in any broadcast; and none of the scripts or recordings in the prosecution's possession included such phrases—besides, virtually every Allied soldier and sailor in the Pacific knew it wasn't true.

Two Japanese-American witnesses, however, testified that the sentences had been inserted by hand and that they had heard her speak them. D'Aquino was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. She served six years and two months, and after her release was subjected to an attempted deportation to Japan, blocked by the dedicated Collins. But she was badgered for a $10,000 fine, which she could not pay until the early 1970s.

In 1977 Iva Toguri d'Aquino was pardoned fully and unconditionally by President Gerald Ford, who, in his last official act, restored her citizenship. She was the only American ever pardoned after being convicted of treason.

Her case offers some lessons: Treason proceedings are sensitive, and may go wrong. The media—or parts of it—can be stunningly irresponsible. On the other hand, American justice can right its mistakes. And, lest we forget, Iva Toguri d'Aquino did not take up arms against this country. The ambiguities of her situation are absent from that of John Walker Lindh. ♦

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Westward Ho!

We seem to have won the Vietnam war, after all.

BY MIKE MURPHY

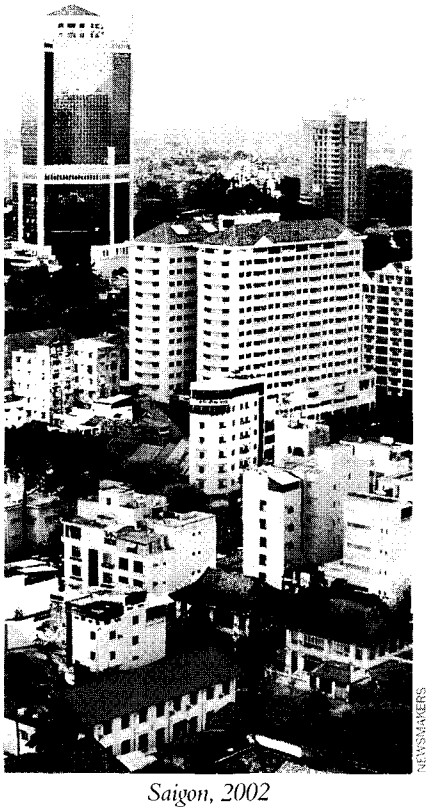
Saigon

IN OUR NATIONAL PSYCHE, the word "Vietnam" remains heavily loaded with meaning, a synonym for failure. But as I travel through Vietnam, witnessing the explosion of free enterprise and the affection for so many things American, a divergent thought keeps recurring: We won, and we won big. Communism is dying fast. Vietnam's new revolution is Coca-Cola red, ubiquitous, and authentic. It marches forward on the power of its own force instead of at communism's bayonet point.

Ho Chi Minh City, still called Saigon by most residents, is the economic spark plug of the country. Six million people live here, and the local economy is growing by nearly 20 percent a year. Despite the slow regional recovery from the Asian financial crisis of 1997, Ho Chi Minh City hums with the reckless, frantic capitalism of the new Asia. Cell phones and the Internet are everywhere, and bright new office towers rise discordantly over the street poverty.

The city is very crowded. Cars are expensive and rare. The streets are thick instead with motorbikes racing about in a free-market blizzard of transportation desires instantly matching up with routes. This terrifies you since it is all done in a mad anarchy without traffic lights or stop signs. You cross the street or pilot your scooter through this moving tangle with a wary understanding that while everyone will make a sporting effort not to run into you, boomtown Vietnam is in a very big hurry. Saigon's main hospital sees more than 200 head injuries from scooter and motorbike injuries each night.

Americans are popular. The Vietnamese-American community is very much in touch with relatives back home, sending perhaps a billion dollars of aid and investment last year. The U.S. dollar and the Vietnamese dong act as dual currencies. America is seen as a land of opportunity, not an enemy (a designation reserved for Vietnam's ancient invader, China).



NEWSMAKERS

Saigon, 2002

As you move north from Ho Chi Minh City you see a more austere Vietnam, but one that is rapidly yielding to the invading mercantile armies from the south. Danang is developing as a resort area. A Ford plant has sprung up near Haiphong. The new Hanoi Hilton is a shiny skyscraper. A sliver of the old POW prison remains as a museum, but the rest was leveled to build a modern office building.

Vietnam is not yet a capitalist paradise. While her leaders have abandoned collectivized agriculture and the country is now a significant food exporter, too many government policymakers act like proud alumni of Moscow's Patrice Lumumba University, class of '69. Bureaucracies still need to be shuttered, patents and intellectual property fully protected, and corruption stamped out. Most of all, though, this increasingly free-market nation needs to be free. Vietnam's government remains sternly authoritarian. Speech is not free. The children of families accused of complicity with the old South Vietnamese regime are discriminated against. Still, the government is tolerating more open criticism, and even the state's handpicked interpreters roll their eyes at some of the Communist boilerplate they are instructed to recite. Vietnam's new economy is outracing her obsolete state.

The war casts a long shadow, though, and it forces a question. A frequent stop for Western tourists and Vietnamese school kids alike is the dank Viet Cong tunnel complex northwest of Saigon. Retired Viet Cong fighters serve as guides to the sprawling underground redoubt. You walk along old jungle paths once patrolled by U.S. soldiers. The concealed trip wires are now rigged with firecrackers instead of land mines (the European tourists laugh far more when you trigger one than do the Americans). Smiling guides pop out of hidden trap doors. There is a burned out hulk of a destroyed American tank, a vile exhibit on booby traps, and an insulting propaganda film from the late sixties full of crude lies that only Jane Fonda could have believed. This ghastly theme park, the most popular tourist attraction in Vietnam, is for me the most disturbing. It is impossible to see the surging victory of free enterprise in Vietnam and then not wonder about the bloody cost of the war: Was it necessary? The miles of insurrectionary tunnels displayed at the gruesome theme park answer the question. We had no choice.

Mike Murphy is a political and media consultant.

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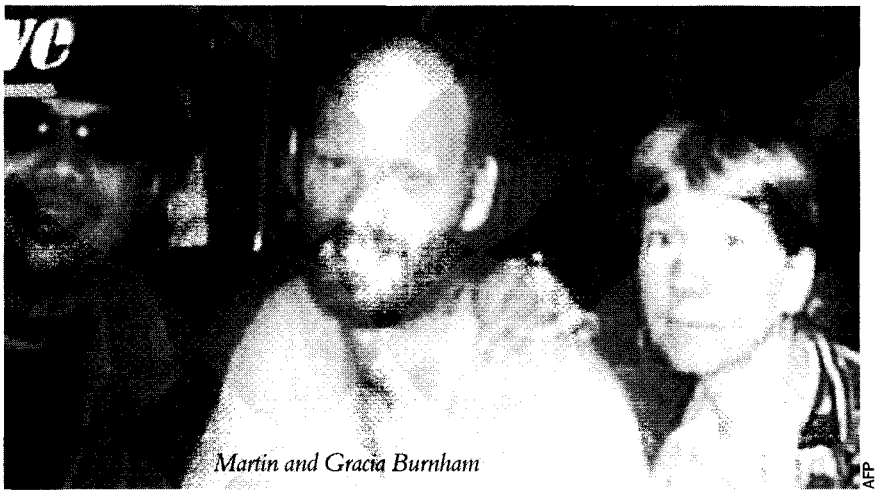
The high stakes of the time are too easily forgotten. The Communists of the '40s, '50s, and '60s were not hapless comedy commissars to be chuckled about today. We won the Cold War so we wrote its history, and in doing so we have depreciated our old enemies into impotence. The truth is far different. The Communists of the Stalin and Mao era built vast snarling armies, slaughtered innocents across the globe, and swore our destruction. They were evil and they really did want to rule the world. They lost only because they lacked enough strength, not because they were not serious.

The great waste of Vietnam was not our noble war to save Southeast Asia from communism, but our abandonment of the southern regime after 1972. We did not fight the enemy to win, and when America finally withdrew, the Democrats in Congress and their allies in the media and policy-making elite compounded that mistake by abandoning our far-from-perfect friends in South Vietnam and denying them the money they needed to fight for survival against an exhausted North Vietnam. We can never know if South Vietnam would have endured, but we do know that after the South fell, the innocent people of Vietnam endured a horrific lost decade of bloody repression and political murder, forced reeducation, property confiscation, agricultural disaster, pogroms against ethnic Chinese, more war, and great poverty. That slaughter might have been prevented.

Ho Chi Minh City runs mostly along the western bank of the Saigon River. From downtown, you look across the busy river to a long line of enormous billboards advertising various consumer brands and products. The largest sign of all is bright red. It features a kindly profile of Ho Chi Minh issuing a windy revolutionary hurrah. Despite the sign's peeling paint, it is starkly visible from a long distance. At night, however, Ho's great sign disappears. It's extravagantly rigged for illumination, but nobody bothers to turn the lights on. The commercial signs burn all night, and you can see them for miles. ♦

The Philippine Front

Two Americans remain hostage as the war on terrorism looks east. BY VICTORINO MATUS



Martin and Gracia Burnham

AFP

WHILE MANY OF US were enjoying our Christmas turkeys and toasting the New Year, two Americans spent the holidays deep in the jungles of the Philippines, their bodies malnourished, their mouths covered with sores, on the verge of mental breakdown, and led around on leashes by terrorists. It is now more than seven months since the Muslim separatist group Abu Sayyaf abducted Kansas missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham, along with 18 other tourists, from a resort on Palawan island. Last June, one of the Americans, Guillermo Sobero, was beheaded. The Abu Sayyaf currently holds three hostages—the Burnhams and a Filipino nurse, Deborah Yap.

Philippine Southern Command chief Roy Cimatu had promised to rescue the remaining hostages by Christmas. That deadline passed. Then Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesman for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, said the prisoners would be freed by New Year's. That day also came and went. It's the sort of disappointment friends of the Burnham family are used to. Scott Ross, of the New Tribes Mission, with which the Burnhams are affiliated, said he's heard this all before: "First they said October. Then November. Then Ramadan. We'll believe it when we see it."

It's not that the Philippines isn't trying. Forty-three of its soldiers have lost their lives fighting the terrorists since the hostages' capture. And the government asked the United States for help in the form of training, logistics, and military equipment. Washington obliged, supplying a $92 million aid package that included eight Huey helicopters, a C-130 transport, and 30,000 M-16s. It also dispatched an Army assessment team, rumored to be members of the Delta Force. This team is now training a new elite all-Filipino counterterrorism unit, the Light Reaction

Victorino Matus is an assistant managing editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Company. The Philippine military is asking for more in the way of surveillance gear, or "target acquisition assets." But now pressure is mounting for America to be actively engaged in the rescue campaign.

The Burnhams' parents and the New Tribes Mission have been lobbying the Bush administration to get more involved in freeing the hostages. And just last week, Representative Todd Tiahrt of Kansas flew to the Philippines to meet with military and government officials to push for a more active U.S. role. "Americans should be standing shoulder to shoulder with the Filipinos," he told me. The Philippine government, however, is steadfast in its insistence that no foreign troops set foot in the country. It's a sticking point in the constitution: To allow Americans to fight alongside Filipinos would require an act of Congress.

Such an act may never be passed. President Arroyo is not exactly popular right now—even with her own cabinet. Coups have been attempted. Senators are trying to embarrass her by brokering ransom deals. Meanwhile, tourism is collapsing. The economy is in a shambles, and things won't improve until the country is rid of the terrorists. Hence Arroyo's compromise: American training but not American troops.

"'Training' is definitely the key word," says Tiahrt, but he adds, "I would like to call it 'on-the-job' training."

The congressman met with key officials in both the Philippine government and military. He admits the job isn't easy. "The terrain is steep and rugged, lush with vegetation. It's all canopies, and you can practically hide a whole football field full of soldiers underneath it and you wouldn't see it from a plane. . . . There are fires on the ground that you can't see from the sky." Tiahrt actually flew over Basilan island, where the terrorists and their prisoners are hidden.

But this is all the more reason to send in U.S. Special Forces, whose expertise would complement Philippine efforts. There are currently more than 5,000 Filipino soldiers on Basilan, and the Abu Sayyaf are bottled up in a mere three-by-three-kilometer area. Astonishingly, there are believed to be only around 18 members of Abu Sayyaf left. But the Philippine Marines are being pulled back and replaced by Philippine Army regulars. And the Light Reaction Company trained by U.S. specialists has yet to be called to duty. More frustrating, at least one Filipino soldier has had visual confirmation of the Burnhams' whereabouts.

In other words, there are about 278 Filipino soldiers for every terrorist, and the potential field of operations is extremely small. Yet, the Burnhams languish and America must wait.

It's possible, of course, that there is more to this compromise than meets the eye. Sources say Arroyo dearly wants the Americans to do whatever it takes to eliminate Abu Sayyaf and free the hostages. Under the guise of "training," U.S. Special Forces may actually be able to engage covertly in rescue efforts.

"It gets very complicated, and the Philippine government is extremely sensitive to what terms the Americans use," says a congressional source familiar with the crisis. "They don't like the word 'involvement.' They prefer 'cooperation.' But there could be many more Americans involved in the coming months."

While it is in both countries' best interests to stop terrorism and rescue the hostages, it is—or should be—absolutely imperative for the United States to do whatever it takes to free its own people. Says Tiahrt, "After Afghanistan, this is the next priority because there are Americans at risk. Besides that, if it were me, and I'm sure if it were you, as an American, you'd hope America would come to your rescue." Keep hoping. ♦

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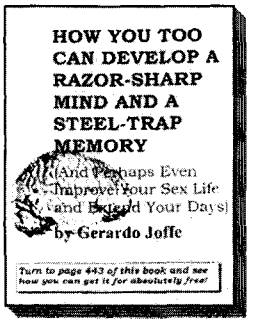

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the weekly Standard

Leaving Education Reform Behind

Bush will sign the bill. But there's not much good left in it. BY CHESTER E. FINN JR.

IN HIS SHOWCASE political event of the week, President George W. Bush will finally get to sign the "No Child Left Behind Act," his cherished education bill, which cleared Congress in December. It is already being described as a revolution in federal education policy, a triumph of bipartisanship and good sense that promises to fix what ails American schools, teachers, and students.

The reality, alas, is far more modest. The bill contains some useful small reforms in this vast and troubled realm, and one provision with the potential to make a sizable difference: the requirement that states test all their children in math and science every year in grades three through eight.

That's about all that remains of President Bush's once-ambitious plan to overhaul LBJ-era education programs. Early on, the White House said it would accept only a bipartisan bill, thus giving a veto over its contents to Democrats Ted Kennedy in the Senate and George Miller in the House. They seized the opportunity, throttling the president's other two key ideas—choice for parents and flexibility for states—and boosting the education budget by billions. The one major issue on which they (and their new colleague Jim Jeffords) failed to prevail was an ill-conceived effort to turn the federal "special education" program for disabled youngsters into a pricey off-budget entitlement.

The resulting measure is, therefore, a welcome improvement on current law but no revolution. Still, it's a political win for Bush, one of the most important domestic accomplishments of his first year, a boost to the GOP's quest to become "the education party," and, if energetically implemented, an opportunity to elevate the achievement of American students, especially the poorest among them.

Once the popping flashbulbs and bipartisan hugs cease and the policy (and media) focus shifts back to terrorism and the economy, the education world will turn to the quiet but crucial matter of translating into schoolhouse practice the dozens of programs and hundreds of provisions in this thousand-page bill. That sounds like a bureaucratic yawner, but in truth it matters quite a lot. To avoid deadlock, Senate-House conferees punted some sticky issues to the Education Department to resolve. Among them: determining what constitutes acceptable state tests; establishing criteria by which to approve a state's school accountability plan; defining "qualified" teachers; and deciding how broadly to interpret a clause that lets schools avoid sanctions if their students make lesser gains than those required under the bill's "adequate yearly progress" provision. With such weighty matters come many smaller issues, and their handling will determine what effect this legislation actually has in millions of separate classrooms.

History offers no grounds for optimism that this will be done quickly or well. Congress habitually builds such long timelines into these measures that the most important changes need not even be made until someone else's term in office. (States have five years, for example, to comply with the new testing requirement.) The last time

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around, Bill Clinton's Education Department dawdled so long in implementing the 1994 education amendments that today—seven years later—most states still don't comply with some of their core provisions.

Such matters are traditionally entrusted to change-averse civil servants overseen by inexperienced political appointees, who are watched closely by their masters lest they offend key governors or congressmen or make it harder for the president's party in upcoming elections. Implementation thus becomes the stuff of interminable meetings, countless forms, endless delays, and multiple extensions and waivers, while very little changes in the classroom.

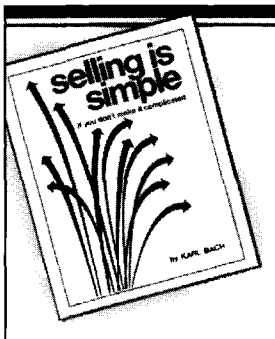
This fate could befall "No Child Left Behind." But Education Secretary Rod Paige and his team are gearing up for a different approach. Indeed, they see this as their real debut—the White House staff having tightly controlled the legislative phase. Paige is quiet and self-effacing, but his strong will and administrative acumen made a big difference in Houston's sprawling school system, where he excelled at distinguishing areas where schools should be free to innovate from those requiring close central monitoring. If he and his lieutenants at the Education Department approach states in a similar vein, they could reverse the dysfunctional tendency of federal education officials to meddle in all the small stuff while paying scant attention to the big issues, such as whether children are learning and rich-poor gaps are narrowing.

Congress did not make things easy for Paige when it insisted on retaining many micro-mandates concerning where and how states and school systems must spend federal dollars. But he and his team still have some leeway in program implementation to do things right—and a fresh chance to create a more open channel between top federal officials and governors, legislators, and other key state leaders. Unless that channel stays active—and much sunlight falls on what everyone is actually doing in Washington, the states, and the districts—the modest promise of "No Child Left Behind" will not be kept.

All this, however, is just the first act of a three-act education drama. After a brief intermission, the Bush administration and Congress must turn to "special" education—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—which, after 25 years, urgently needs top-to-bottom rethinking. (Fortunately, Rep. John Boehner and the House of Representatives spurned the Kennedy-Jeffords-Miller plan to "fully fund" the current program, which would have killed any hope of reforming it.)

Though the loudest complaint about IDEA is how much it costs states and communities to comply with its elaborate red tape, the real problem is that it ill-serves millions of kids. Cast in the civil-rights mode of the mid-1970s, it focuses on services and procedures rather than whether children are learning anything. It's an educational cul-de-sac from which few ever escape, especially minority youngsters. It keeps growing—some 12 percent of all students are now covered—as every sort of teaching-and-learning failure gets transformed into a "disability." It neglects the early identification and correction of reading problems, which are the usual symptoms of "learning disabilities," many of which are better termed "teaching disabilities." And it creates vexing double standards, particularly with respect to discipline, whereby special ed youngsters are exempted from school rules that others must obey.

The White House has appointed a blue-ribbon commission, chaired by former Iowa governor Terry Branstad, to sort through all this and make recommendations, and recruited a reform-minded New Mexican named Bob Pasternack to head this section of



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the Department of Education. There's no dearth of ideas for bold changes, such as "voucherizing" special ed, as Florida has already done. But politics works against any serious reform of this domain. Elected officials are wary of its swarming lobbyists, all claiming to be tending to America's neediest children even as they advance the interests of sundry "experts." States and communities would settle for simple fiscal relief. And a number of top federal policymakers have disabled kids or grandchildren whose private school tuitions are now being paid by this program—thanks to a tantalizing parent-choice provision that today benefits mainly the upper middle class—and are wary of rocking the boat.

Act three of this drama involves higher education, whose massive federal subsidy programs come up for renewal two years hence. These, too, still operate as they did in the '60s and '70s, focusing almost entirely on "access" and "equality" and paying no attention to whether anybody is learning anything in college, much less learning anything important.

As with special ed, the policy challenge is to bring the "No Child Left Behind" mindset—with its emphasis on academic achievement and institutional accountability for student learning—to bear on America's sprawling higher education system. The federal role here, too, should shift from an obsession with inputs and services to a focus on results. But the politics of higher education also thwarts fundamental reform, and the status quo is buttressed by the widespread and carefully nurtured illusion that U.S. colleges are doing fine just as they are.

Plenty of other education challenges will punctuate the play's intermissions, including such low-profile but consequential matters as Washington's handling of education research and statistics. As with special ed and higher ed, these would benefit from the impatient, results-minded focus that George W. Bush urged a year ago when he launched the education bill he's about to sign. In the best of all possible worlds, this would turn out to be Bush's true education legacy: establishing in Washington the view that what matters in a federal program is not what rules are followed, what services are provided, or what money is spent where, but whether young people are actually learning what they should. This may be too much to expect. But what's a new year if not a time for optimistic resolutions? ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Girl Power! and Other Federal Idiocy

Government-sponsored propaganda for girls and boys.

By Christina Hoff Sommers

George W. Bush's Department of Health and Human Services is planning to extend to boys a favorite initiative of the Clinton administration, a program sporting the perky name "Girl Power!" Oddly enough, plans for "Boy Talk" are going forward despite the absence of any evidence that the six-year-old Girl Power! campaign has succeeded at its stated mission—discouraging substance abuse among girls by boosting their self-esteem and academic achievement. But then indifference to scientific soundness has been a hallmark of this enterprise from the beginning. Girl Power! was launched in 1996, at a time when federal officials were deluged with statistics showing that an educational gender gap was indeed growing, and those on the wrong side of it were boys.

In 1995, the Department of Education, for example, released "The Educational Progress of Women," a report comparing male and female achievement. Among its findings: "Females are more likely than males to come to school prepared to learn and to participate in school activities." Girls were more likely than boys to assume school leadership positions, to qualify for honors programs, and to enter college. One of the most disquieting findings was that "the gap in reading proficiency between males and females [favoring females] is roughly equivalent to about one and a half years of schooling."

But during the years when such findings were becoming better known, Donna Shalala was in charge at Health and Human Services, and underachieving, at-risk boys were not a priority. Rather, Shalala subscribed to the principle that girls are shortchanged victims in need of special attention. To shore up this notion, her department disseminated misleading or flat-out erroneous claims.

Thus, HHS "fact sheets" inform us that "teachers often defer to male leadership and social dominance" and that "girls (more so than boys) may develop low self-esteem . . . and perform less well in school." But girls perform better in school than boys. And if teachers are deferring to male leadership, the students themselves appear to be unaware of it. In a 1993 Department of Education study of several thousand tenth graders, 72 percent of girls but only 68 percent of boys "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "Teachers listen to what I have to say."

HHS "fact sheets" and "talking points" similarly claim that "adolescent girls are twice as likely to attempt suicide than boys." They leave unmentioned the fact that boys actually kill themselves at five or six times the rate of girls. According to Centers for Disease Control reports, in a typical year (1997), there were 4,483 suicides of people between the ages of 5 and 24. Of these, 701 were females, 3,782 males.

The HHS researchers and officials who developed Girl Power! kept a discreet distance from the data reported by the Department of Education and the CDC. Instead, they relied heavily on advocacy research of girl-partisan groups such as the American Association of University Women and on the "findings" of gender scholars like David Sadker of American University and Carol Gilligan, Harvard's first professor of gender studies. These scholars, when

EDITOR'S NOTE: Christina Hoff Sommers, author of *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming our Young Men*, was stopped from completing her remarks at a government conference on drug-abuse prevention for boys, held in Baltimore on November 1. Partway through her talk, Sommers, an invited speaker, was cut off by the moderator, insulted by a fellow participant, and jeered by many in attendance. According to Stanley Kurtz, who reviewed a tape and transcript for *National Review Online*, "Sommers was silenced the moment she began to raise questions about 'Girl Power!'—the female counterpart of the 'Boy Talk' drug prevention program that was the subject of the conference." We asked Sommers to describe these two taxpayer-financed educational campaigns.

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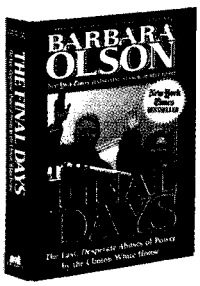

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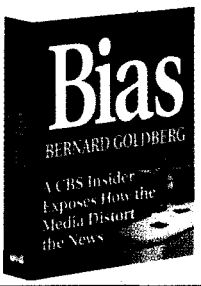

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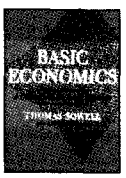

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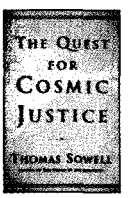

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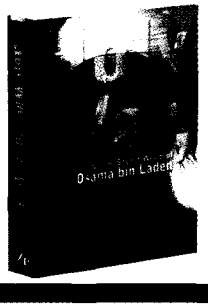

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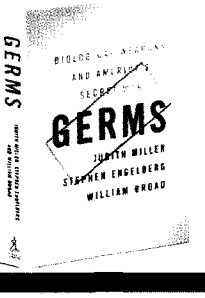

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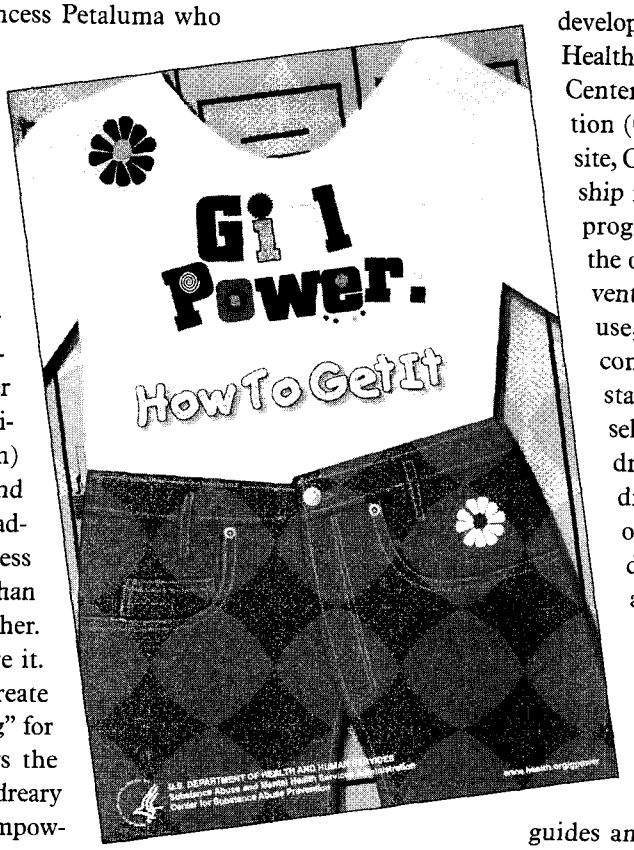
asked, notoriously fail to produce the data that allegedly support their claim that girls are "shortchanged," "silenced" victims of gender bias in the schools and in society at large.

The numerous Girl Power! brochures and booklets contain some innocuous messages, including health tips from which all children could benefit, boys no less than girls. Otherwise their content is pure feminist propaganda. One Girl Power! "activity guide" opens with a story about Princess Petaluma who "began to despise her Princesshood on her 11th birthday." She prefers hunting unicorns and entering archery contests with the knights to sewing and dancing. Her archery skills are not merely equal to the knights'—they are far better. "Is it her fault that she had won the contest nine out of ten times?" Her father the king (a clueless, irascible, and benighted patriarch) punishes her by offering her hand in marriage to a "selfish and bad-tempered" prince. The princess rebels. "I can be a better King than any son," she shouts at her father. She demands a chance to prove it. Readers are then invited to create their own "Girl-Powered ending" for the story. The moral is always the same: Traditional femininity is dreary and oppressive, and spirited, empowered girls should resist it.



"Girl quotes" expressing anger and resentment of males are featured in many Girl Power! booklets. A girl named Nina says, "We need to show those boys we are the BOMB!" Another girl, Lily, says, "At dinner, I am the one who gets yelled at for interrupting, not my brothers." Twelve-year-old Gabriela boasts, "I do things that boys are afraid to do. I ride a horse everyday. I get up at 6:30 A.M. just to swim in a freezing pool." Gabriela adds, "I don't know who came up with the idea 'boys are better than girls' but I do know that we are all the same"—except she's just said she was braver. Most girls do not normally think of boys as a hostile rival tribe with whom they are competing; but this is the outlook Girl Power! inculcates.

A Girl Power! assignment book is full of "Fun Facts" for girls to enjoy. Thus, "In 1970, 42 percent of all college undergraduates were women; in 1996, 56 percent were women." If the fact that girls increasingly outnumber boys in college is "fun," Girl Power! advocates should get a real kick out of two recent pieces of data (from *Trends in Educational Equity*, by the National Center for Educational Statistics, and *The State of Blacks in America*, by the National Urban League, respectively): (1) The writing scores of male eleventh graders are comparable to those of female eighth graders; and (2) of African Americans now in college, approximately 63 percent are female, 37 percent male.

Most Girl Power! materials were developed in a little-known division of Health and Human Services called the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). According to its website, CSAP "provides national leadership in the development of policies, programs, and services to prevent the onset of illegal drug use, to prevent underage alcohol and tobacco use, and to reduce the negative consequences of using substances." Why the Girl Power! self-esteem initiative belongs in a drug-use prevention research division is not explained. No one has shown that single-sex drug prevention programs are any more effective than gender-neutral programs. Nor has CSAP ever seen the need to spend any part of its large budget on outcome studies to determine whether the benefits promised by Girl Power! guides and activity books are actually achieved. (Annual funding for all of CSAP approaches half a billion dollars; expenditures for Girl Power!, while just a small part of that, are difficult to ascertain.) The goal is exemplary: to "help girls make the most of their lives." But pieties are no substitute for proof of effectiveness.

It's perhaps not surprising that CSAP has become something of a joke among researchers seriously interested in the issue of drug abuse. Sally Satel, a psychiatrist who combines policy research at the American Enterprise Institute with clinical work among substance abusers, expresses the dismay of some scientific observers when she says, "With so much of its money spent developing techniques to prevent drug use, one would think CSAP would place a strong emphasis on research design, data collection, and interpretation. Think again."

Operating outside the protocols of social science and

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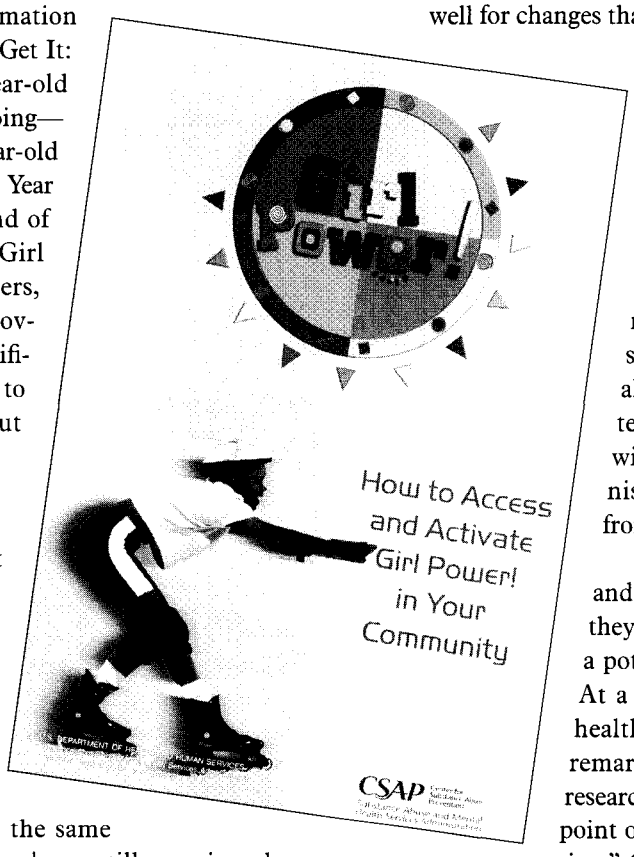
blessed with political backers in high places—not just Secretary Shalala, but also first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton—Girl Power! proliferated and by now is totally out of control. Here is a partial list of the handsomely and expensively produced booklets, manuals, and guides that are sent on request to anyone who asks for them: "Welcome to Girl Power!," "Girl Power! Across the Country," "How to Access and Activate Girl Power! in your Community," "Five Steps to Getting the Media to Cover Girl Power!," "Girl Power! Speaker's Guide," "For Adults who Care about Girls—A Resource Guide," "Girl Power! Campaign Information Packet," "Girl Power! How to Get It: Activity Guide for 9- to 11-year-old girls," "Girl Power! Keep it Going—Activity Guide for 12- to 14-year-old girls," and "Girl Power! School Year Assignment Book." By the end of the Clinton presidency, the Girl Power! program offered posters, postcards, bookmarks, book covers, stickers, water bottles, certificates, T-shirts, pins, and caps to "anyone who cares about girls"—"free of charge."



Meanwhile, what about the boys? Finally, six years after the inception of Girl Power! and under a new administration, CSAP is beginning to respond to criticism of its total neglect of half of American youths. But the same people who created Girl Power! are still running the agency, and there are signs of a disaster in the making. The new program is based on the same questionable gender theory that inspired Girl Power! Its designers take a dim view of the ways masculinity and femininity are "constructed" in our society, and they seek to make boys and girls as much alike as possible. Girls need to be encouraged to take power, as the Princess Petaluma did; boys need to learn to sit quietly and chat freely about their feelings. The titles of the respective CSAP programs—"Boy Talk" and "Girl Power!"—reflect this dubious philosophy.

Boys, according to materials compiled by Boy Talk planners, "are generally socialized to be self-reliant and independent, not to show emotion." This is supposedly a bad thing. If Boy Talk gets off the ground, we will soon see a spate of U.S. government-sponsored manuals, activity guides, diaries, T-shirts, coasters, and caps intended to rescue boys from their masculinity.

It is always possible, of course, that HHS secretary Tommy Thompson will make it his business to restore elementary standards of common sense to his department. He has just appointed Charles Curie to direct the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, of which CSAP is a division. Curie, who was previously deputy secretary for mental health and substance abuse services in Pennsylvania, has a solid record of implementing effective and empirically tested programs. That augurs well for changes that are badly needed.

One may hope that Thompson and Curie will recognize the worthlessness of the Boy Talk project and eliminate it before it eats up any more money and confuses more boys. Recent events make plain that the nation needs self-reliant, independent, stoical young men to protect us all. Girl Power!, too, should be terminated, even though this will call down the wrath of feminists and a frenzy of lobbying from girl-partisans everywhere.

Girl Power!—as Thompson and Curie must appreciate, should they decide to grasp this nettle—is a potent symbol for its proponents. At a press conference on women's health in 1993, Secretary Shalala remarked that "for too long, health research has been addressed from one point of view, the white male point of view." Girl Power! seems to have provided Shalala and like-minded "theorists" with a golden opportunity to redress the historic imbalance by launching a program free of what feminist epistemologists call "male ways of knowing"—ways of knowing consistent with the norms of logic, respect for facts, and rules of evidence.

Someone somewhere in the Clinton administration *must* have been skeptical about the Girl Power! campaign, with its anti-male subtext, its propensity to psychobabble, its spiteful "girl quotes," and its baseless belief that girls are being shortchanged and need to be empowered. But Democrats tend to run for cover whenever the "female ways of knowing" crowd shows up. It remains to be seen whether Republicans have the steel to take on this embarrassing government propaganda and stand their ground. ♦

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Closing in on Cloning

Don't expect an honest debate from cloning advocates as the legislative fight heats up.

By Wesley J. Smith

The Brave New World Order is hurtling toward us at Mach speed. With the announcement by Advanced Cell Technology that it has created the first human clones and developed them into six-cell embryos, the country finds itself at an ethical point of no return. Either Congress will ban human cloning, or human cloning will soon be a *fait accompli*.

With cloning—and its first cousin, embryonic stem cell research—biotech companies are embarked upon a radical enterprise. They intend to make vast fortunes by patenting and marketing products derived from the destruction of human life. If they succeed, certain categories of humanity will be reduced to a commodity with no greater moral standing than penicillin mold. For those who doubt the objectifying intent of this research, note the language of an October 1, 2001, press release by the Geron Corp., crowing that one of its recent research breakthroughs "greatly facilitates the development of scalable manufacturing processes to enable commercialization of hES (human embryonic stem) cell-based products."

How did we get this far down the slippery slope this fast? After all, it has been only a few months since President Bush supposedly settled the stem cell debate by permitting limited federal funding of research using existing stem cell lines derived from human embryos. But as the Spanish Civil War was really just the opening engagement of World War II, the controversy over embryonic stem cell research can now be seen as merely a precursor to the greater clash over cloning about to unfold.

The struggle over embryonic stem cell research began less than two years ago when biotech companies and their allies within the bioethics movement convinced President Clinton to open the spigot of federal funding. Clinton was willing, but he had a significant legal problem to overcome. Extracting stem cells kills embryos and federal law (the Dickey Amendment) explicitly prohibits federal funding for destructive embryonic research.

What to do? Clinton's bioethics commission recommended a Clintonian approach: Simply use private money to pay for destruction of the embryos and the extraction of their stem cells. After that, the federal government could pick up the tab. Clinton signed the order shortly before leaving office, and in doing so plopped George W. Bush right onto the hot griddle of an unwanted moral controversy.

Fulfilling his campaign promise to oppose embryonic stem cell research, President Bush promptly suspended Clinton's executive order, sparking a furious, three-pronged political counterattack. First, making a strong appeal to the pragmatism that is central to the American character, promoters of embryonic stem cell research promised that only unwanted embryos left over from in vitro fertilization procedures and due to be destroyed would be used in the research. Since these embryos were doomed in any event, the argument went, we might as well get some use out of them.

The second prong consisted of junk science. Proponents of embryonic stem cell research, such as Senator Orrin Hatch, argued that the embryos in question weren't *really* the early stages of human life because they would never be implanted. "Life begins in a womb, not in a Petri dish," Hatch said. Others assured squeamish Americans that these frozen humans "no larger than the period at the end of this sentence," as the pro-stem cell research propaganda had it, were actually "pre-embryos," cells of no significant moral concern.

The third prong was an intensely emotional appeal—typically featuring testimony from celebrity disease or injury victims such as Christopher Reeve, Mary Tyler

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Moore, and Michael J. Fox—promoting embryonic stem cell research as a veritable cornucopia of miraculous medical cures. We were told that if the government would only fund such research, quadriplegics might walk, Parkinson's patients would regain control over their bodily movements, and diabetics would be liberated from insulin.

This well-coordinated campaign was successful. Polls soon showed growing support for federal funding—so long as only doomed, leftover in vitro embryos were used. By last summer, the pressure to fully fund embryonic stem cell research had grown white hot, with more than 60 senators and 260 congressmen—including some of the president's closest political allies—publicly vowing to overturn a decision by President Bush to prohibit federal funding. Pushed into this very tight political corner, the administration let it be known that President Bush had entered a season of deep moral contemplation.

In early August, in his first televised policy speech to the nation, Bush announced his decision. Informing the nation of the importance of the moral issues involved in the debate, Bush announced that he would permit limited federal funding of research involving stem cell lines extracted from embryos—but only from cell lines already in existence. In other words, no federal money would fund research on stem cell lines taken from embryos that were not already dead.

Proponents of embryonic stem cell research howled at having their agenda substantially thwarted. Americans were warned, hyperbolically, that a new "dark age" in scientific research was descending. Some scientists spoke of pulling up stakes and moving overseas. At least one prominent researcher did just that.

Opponents, on the other hand, were divided. Some, including this writer, applauded the decision, believing that President Bush's "compromise" had the virtue of being politically defensible and was thus the best decision possible under difficult circumstances. Others denounced the decision on principle, worrying that by permitting federal funding of research on cell lines that had been derived from the taking of embryonic human life, the imprimatur of the United States would be placed on the entire enterprise, making it almost impossible to prevent further encroachments by the Brave New World Order. That judgment will be tested in the attempt to outlaw human cloning.

It may well be more difficult to outlaw human cloning than it was to restrict federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. The earlier debate was essentially a struggle to win over the heart and mind of one man: President George W. Bush. But the president cannot settle the cloning dispute with the stroke of a pen on the signature line of an executive order. It will require legislation that the Republican House and the Democratic Senate can agree upon. That will be no easy task, considering the awesome lobbying and public relations power of the biotech industry, which is now fully engaged and determined to keep human cloning legal.

Still, opponents of human cloning would appear to have a strong hand. The American people are very squeamish about cloning. President Bush supports a ban, and he is a far more popular leader today than when he announced his stem cell decision. Moreover, the House of Representatives already passed a strong ban last year in a lopsided bipartisan vote.

But a formidable hurdle remains: the United States Senate. Majority Leader Tom Daschle has prevented S 790, legislation virtually identical to that which passed the House, from coming to the floor of the Senate before this spring. But all signs are that the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2001 is in for a very bumpy ride. One indicator: The Senate recently refused to enact a six-month legal moratorium in the wake of ACT's cloning announcement.

And so the fight is on. If a ban on human cloning is to pass in the Senate, its supporters will have to surmount the following series of tactics by cloning enthusiasts.

• **The False Distinction Between "Reproductive Cloning" and "Therapeutic Cloning."** To keep human cloning legal, cloning advocates seek to distinguish between "reproductive cloning," which they are willing to prohibit, and so-called "therapeutic cloning," which they urge remain legal. According to this argument, reproductive cloning consists of implanting a cloned embryo into a willing woman's womb for the purposes of gestation and birth. Outlaw this activity to your heart's content, cloning proponents argue, because bringing a cloned embryo to term can't yet be safely accomplished. But don't prohibit the creation of human embryonic clones destined to be experimented upon, because to do so would unduly interfere with medical research.

But the distinction is false. The act of cloning does not take place when a baby clone is born. It takes place when an egg, which has had its nucleus removed and replaced with genetic material of the individual to be cloned, is stimulated to begin embryonic growth. Once that process begins, a human clone exists.

At this point, a clone that will be used in research is no different in kind or nature from one destined for implantation in a uterus. To put it another way, a clone is a clone is a clone. The only question remaining is the fate of the new cloned human life. Merely banning clones for use in

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reproduction would free biotech companies to make all of the human clones they desire, without limit—so long as they destroy them rather than bring them to birth.

• **The Threat That Medical Breakthroughs Will Not Happen Without Cloning.** Only six months ago the country was most earnestly assured by supporters of embryonic stem cell research that *all* we need to achieve our miraculous medical future are the stem cells of doomed in vitro embryos. Now, some of these same advocates argue—and just as earnestly—that *all* we need to achieve our miraculous medical future are the stem cells taken from human clones.

What happened to limiting research to IVF embryos? It turns out there may be a hitch that could prevent stem cells harvested from normal human embryos from being used in future medical therapies: A patient's immune system could reject tissues grown from embryonic stem cells that are injected into the body in the same way the body strives to reject transplanted organs. But, the theory goes, if the stem cells were extracted from a clone of the patient, the body would not reject the treatment because the tissues would be virtually identical to the patient's.

Peter Steiner

Of course promoters of federal funding of embryonic stem cell research knew this during the earlier debate. They just didn't talk about it, realizing that if the American people suspected embryonic stem cell research would lead directly to human cloning, their cause might be lost. Now, with the stem cell debate behind them, it is as if the earlier assurances about limiting embryonic research never happened. This raises an important question: Why should Americans believe the new assurances that human clones will not be used for reproductive purposes, when the former promises about embryonic stem cell research were disingenuous?

It's also the case that the "promise" of research cloning is wildly speculative. Researchers don't even yet know whether they can maintain a human clone long enough to extract stem cells. (Cloning experiments on primates seem to indicate that maintaining a human clone may be exceedingly difficult.)

Nor do they know whether embryonic stem cell therapy itself will be able to cure diseases and overcome disabilities. In this regard, it is worth noting that the same level of enthusiasm existed about using tissues from aborted or miscarried fetuses a few years ago. Yet, that research has been generally disappointing and, in one experiment, devastating to the human subjects suffering from Parkinson's disease who were injected with such tissues.

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• **Junk Science, Squared**. Pretending that in vitro embryos weren't really human life during the stem cell debate pales in comparison with the junk science being shoveled in the cloning debate. One argument is that clones aren't distinct human organisms but mere cells, akin to those that fall off your body when you scratch your nose. "To commit ourselves morally to protecting every living cell in the body would be insane," Ronald Green, the Dartmouth bioethicist and longtime promoter of destructive embryonic research, told *U.S. News and World Report*. (It wasn't by chance that ACT selected Green to be on its corporate ethics committee.) In the same article, Robert Lanza, ACT's medical director, made the equally ludicrous mirror-image argument that "all cells are embryonic" because now DNA can be extracted from any cell in the body for use in the construction of a clone. Pro-cloning propaganda thus asserts both that individual somatic cells are akin to embryos and that embryonic clones are nothing but mere (somatic) cells.

Each of these assertions is wrong. Somatic cells, such as those your toothbrush destroys during your morning brushing, are minute parts of the greater organized whole that is a human being. On the other hand, clones in the early stage of development are no different in kind or nature from normal embryos at the same stage of growth. Each is an individual, self-contained form of human life, with a specific genetic makeup and gender.

Nor are individual body cells any more "embryonic" than are ovum or sperm that have not joined in fertilization. Just because a cell has the potential to contribute to the creation of a new human life, that does not *ipso facto* transform the cell into the realization of the potential before it actually happens. Until that time, it is merely a cell, no more and no less.

Here is the biologically accurate truth about what would happen if I submitted to embryonic stem cell therapy derived through cloning:

* My DNA would be extracted from one of my somatic cells.
* The nucleus of an egg that had been purchased from an anonymous young woman by the biotech company holding the patent to my treatment modality would be removed.
* My DNA, consisting of 46 chromosomes, would be inserted into the area of the egg that formerly contained the nucleus.
* The genetically modified egg would then be stimulated to begin embryonic development.
* The resulting embryo would essentially be my identical twin brother. His biological parents would be my parents.
* When my twin brother reached about 14 days of embryonic development, he would be destroyed for his stem cells.
* These stem cells would then be coaxed into differentiating into the type of tissue I needed for my medical treatment.
* A line of these now differentiated cells would be maintained and nurtured until enough tissue existed to be injected into my body.
* My dead twin brother's tissues would then be injected into me, to treat my illness.

These are the facts that should be the subject of the cloning debate, not junk science and euphemistic pro-cloning propaganda that blurs vital distinctions and deconstructs precise scientific definitions.

• **The Claim that Viable Alternatives Do Not Exist.** Promoters of cloning/embryonic stem cell research either pooh-pooh the potential of an alternative source of stem cells or damn it with faint praise. But scientists who have been researching the medical uses of adult and alternative sources of stem cells have already made tremendous strides toward the development of effective stem cell therapies for a wide variety of illnesses and disabilities—without having to resort to embryonic sources. For example, Canadian researchers have discovered that stem cells in the bone marrow of adults can apparently repair organs without being rejected by the patient's immune system. These cells even appear to be safely transplantable between species. If this breakthrough pans out, the alleged need for cloning could utterly disappear.

Meanwhile, the *Journal of the American Heart Association* recently published a study involving stem cells found in human umbilical cord blood. When the umbilical cord blood was injected into the tails of rats, within hours the cells migrated into the animals' brains and began repairing stroke damage. Even rats treated one week after a stroke demonstrated some improvement, according to the report. These are the scientific breakthroughs that promoters of cloning/embryonic stem cell research can only *hope* will begin to be achieved years from now.

The stakes could not be higher in the struggle to ban cloning. But proponents of a ban will not succeed without confronting the false distinctions, bad science, and misleading propaganda of cloning enthusiasts. When the Senate takes up the cloning debate later this year, we will confront the most fundamental of issues: Does individual human life have inherent value simply because it is human? If the answer is yes, then we will ban human cloning as an immoral objectification and unethical commodification of human life. ♦

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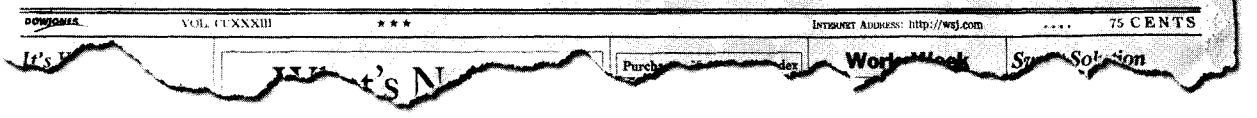

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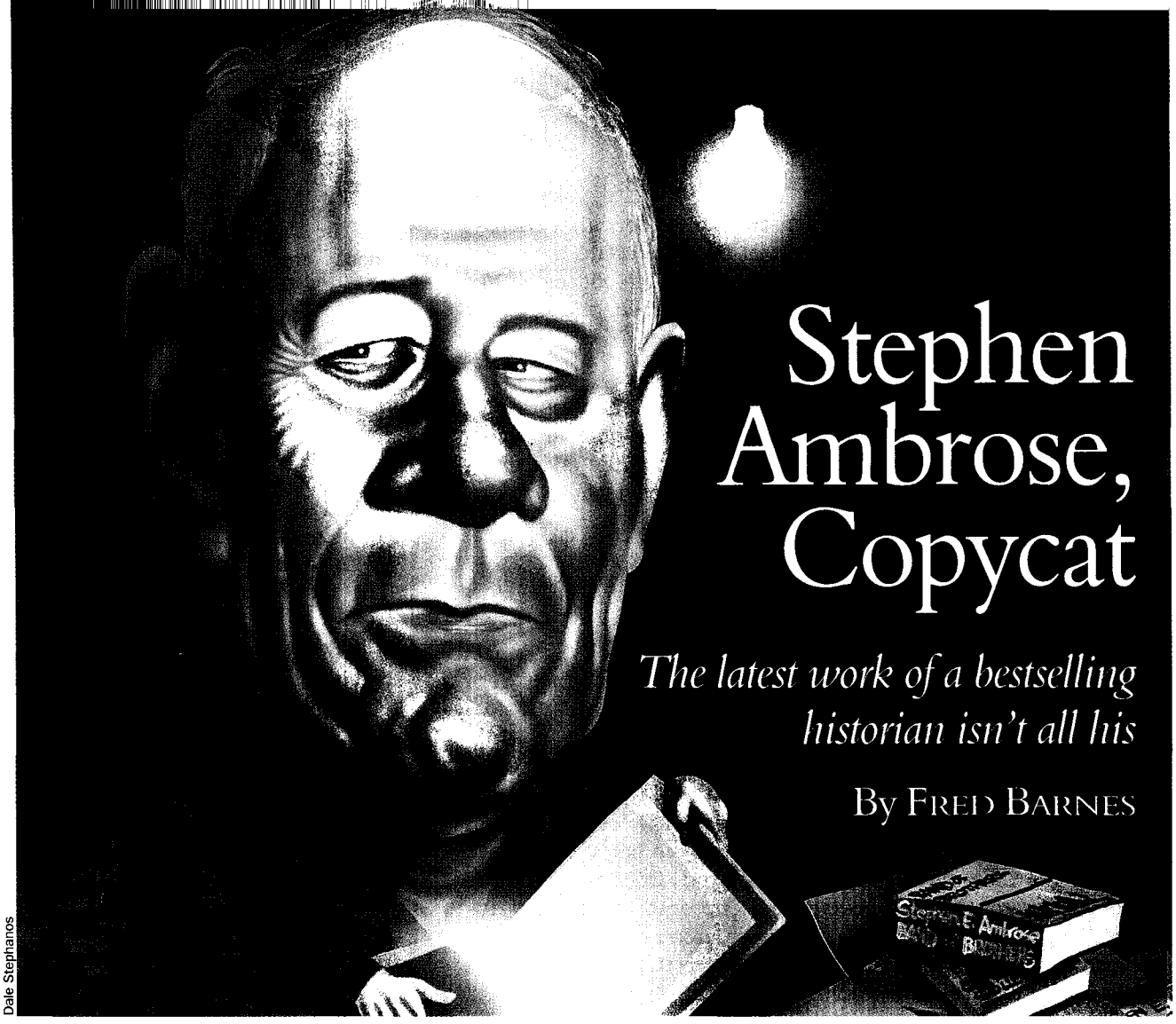

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Stephen Ambrose, Copycat

The latest work of a bestselling historian isn't all his

By Fred Barnes

In 1995, a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Thomas Childers, published a book about his uncle's B-24 crew in World War II. Entitled *Wings of Morning: The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down over Germany in World War II*, the book was well received by critics. Jonathan Yardley of the *Washington Post* called it "powerful and unselfconsciously beautiful." It sold fifteen thousand copies in hardcover and remains available in paperback.

In 2001, Stephen Ambrose, perhaps America's most popular historian and one of its most prolific, also published a book that focuses on a B-24 crew in World War II. This crew's pilot was George McGovern, later a senator and Democratic presidential candidate. Entitled *The Wild Blue: The Men and Boys Who Flew the B-24s over Germany*, the book got mixed reviews. But it nonetheless rose quickly on the best-seller list, ranking twelfth on last week's *New York Times* non-fiction list. The first printing was half a million copies.

Wings of Morning
The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down over Germany in World War II
by Thomas Childers
Perseus, 288 pp., $17.50 paper

The Wild Blue
The Men and Boys Who Flew the B-24s over Germany
by Stephen Ambrose
Simon & Schuster, 299 pp., $26

The two books are similar in more than just subject. Whole passages in *The Wild Blue* are barely distinguishable from those in *Wings of Morning*. Sentences in Ambrose's book are identical to sentences in Childers's. Key phrases from *Wings of Morning*, such as "glittering like mica" and "up, up, up," are repeated verbatim in *The Wild Blue*. None of these—the passages, sentences, phrases—is put in quotation marks and ascribed to Childers. The only attribution Childers gets in *The Wild Blue* is a mention in the bibliography and four footnotes. And the footnotes give no indication that an entire passage has been lifted with only a few alterations from *Wings of Morning* or that a Childers sentence has been copied word-for-word. So, for example, one six-paragraph passage in *The Wild Blue* is structured like the corresponding section of *Wings of Morning*, with ten sentences nearly identical to sentences in Childers's book and one com-

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Thomas Childers, Wings of Morning, p. 83:

Up, up, up, groping through the clouds for what seemed like an eternity. . . . No amount of practice could have prepared them for what they encountered. B-24s, glittering like mica, were popping up out of the clouds all over the sky.

Stephen Ambrose, The Wild Blue, p. 164:

Up, up, up he went, until he got above the clouds. No amount of practice could have prepared the pilot and crew for what they encountered—B-24s, glittering like mica, were popping up out of the clouds over here, over there, everywhere.

Thomas Childers, Wings of Morning, pp. 21-23:

The bombadier, navigator, and nose-turret gunner were forced to squat down, almost on hands and knees, and sidle up to their stations through the nose wheel well of the ship. Once inside, the three men, fully dressed in their bulky flying gear, would be squeezed into a cramped compartment. . . . The remaining members of the crew entered the plane by crawling up through the open bomb-bay doors, no more than three feet off the ground. Once in the bomb bay they would stand upright, step up onto the narrow catwalk. . . . Jerry Barrett, the engineer, stood between the pilot and copilot at takeoff, helping to monitor the engine and fuel gauges, but once in the air he slipped to his position behind the pilot and just across from the radioman. . . . It was the most physically uncomfortable, isolated, and terrifying position on the ship. The gunner climbed into the ball, pulled the hatch closed, and was then lowered into position.

Stephen Ambrose, The Wild Blue, pp. 95-96:

The bombadier, navigator, and nose turret gunner were forced to squat down, almost on hands and knees, and sidle up to their stations through the nosewheel well of the ship. Inside, the three men had to squeeze themselves into a cramped compartment. . . . The other crew members entered the plane by crawling up through the open bomb bay doors, about three feet off the ground. Once inside they would stand upright, step onto the narrow catwalk. . . . The engineer stood between the pilot and co-pilot at takeoff, helping to monitor the engine and fuel gauges. In the air he took his position behind the pilot and just across from the radioman. . . . The ball turret was, as McGovern said, the most physically uncomfortable, isolated, and terrifying position on the plane. The gunner climbed into the ball, pulled the hatch closed, and was then lowered into position.

pletely identical. All this is dealt with in a single footnote that cites pages 21 to 27 in *Wings of Morning* with no further explanation or credit.

The narrative details of the two books are obviously different. Childers's *Wings of Morning* tells the story of a B-24 crew that flew out of England with the Eighth Air Force toward the end of the war. The radio operator was Howard Goodner, a young draftee from Cleveland, Tennessee. Childers, a specialist in German history who teaches popular courses at Penn on World War II and the Third Reich, was prompted to write the book after discovering in 1992 a cache of letters and photographs sent back home by Goodner from 1943 to 1945. The letters were in the house of Childers's grandmother in Tennessee. Childers interviewed the lone living surviving crew member, obtained letters from the family of another crew member, researched military records, and finished the book three years later.

Ambrose's *The Wild Blue* concentrates instead on McGovern, who served as a bomber pilot based in Italy with the Fifteenth Air Force. Ambrose—the author of more than twenty-five books, including a dazzling trilogy on D-Day and its aftermath—quotes McGovern extensively in *The Wild Blue*, for the two men are longtime friends. "I knew something about his career in the Army Air Forces," Ambrose writes in his author's note, "which I always felt he could have used to more effect in his 1972 presidential campaign. Politics aside, I had long been an admirer of what he had done in his B-24 bomber." Ambrose says McGovern was a "good representative" of the World War II generation, "a man who had risked all not for his own benefit but to help bring about victory."

Still, compared with Ambrose's earlier, more impressive works, the book is thinly researched. Ambrose leans on Childers's *Wings of Morning* for one important aspect of the experience of the dozen crew members aboard a B-24: the unpleasantness of life on the plane. To make sure they could endure the cramped conditions, crew members were tested for claustrophobia. Some of the crew, notably the gunners, were

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faced with intense cold. Childers's description of all this is eye-opening and beautifully written.

Which is perhaps why Ambrose was drawn to it. Indeed, at one point, he appears to confuse what he read in Childers with what he heard from McGovern. According to Childers, "The ball turret . . . was the most physically uncomfortable, isolated, and terrifying position on the ship." In *The Wild Blue*, Ambrose writes, "The ball turret was, as McGovern said, the most physically uncomfortable, isolated, and terrifying position on the plane."

The next sentence in *The Wild Blue* is identical to that in *Wings of Morning*: "The gunner climbed into the ball, pulled the hatch closed, and was then lowered into position." And the following sentence is remarkably similar, too. Childers says the B-24 gunner "rode suspended beneath the plane, staring down between his knees at the earth five miles below." Ambrose says gunners "were suspended beneath the plane, staring down between their knees at the earth." Two sentences later, Childers writes, "Ball turret gunners had to be small, but even so very few could actually fit into the turret with a chute on, so they relied on the waist gunner to engage the hydraulic system to raise the turret and then get them out of the ball." Changing that sentence a bit, Ambrose writes, "Although all ball turret gunners were small, few of them had enough room to wear a parachute. If bailout was necessary, they relied on the waist gunner to engage the hydraulic system to raise the turret and help them out and into their parachutes."

Asked about similarities between *The Wild Blue* and *Wings of Morning*, Simon & Schuster, Ambrose's publisher, issued this statement: "Stephen Ambrose's *The Wild Blue* is an original and important work of World War II history. All research garnered from previously published material is appropriately footnoted." The publishing firm claimed the similarities involved only about ten sentences of description of technical matters and that the debt was adequately discharged in the four footnotes.

Childers has not mounted an effort to publicize Ambrose's use of his work; I heard about the similarities from a colleague, not from Childers, who actually assigns two of Ambrose's books, *Band of Brothers* and *D-Day*, in his classes. Childers said he looked up the index when he first got *The Wild Blue* and flipped to the parts where his work was footnoted. His first reaction was, "this sounds awfully familiar. It didn't make me mad. It made me disappointed." Childers said he hasn't written Ambrose. "What would I say?" he asked. "Shame on you?" He added he "doesn't want to go after Stephen Ambrose. The man has done an awful lot of good work."

Thomas Childers, Wings of Morning, p. 11:

Howard struggled to master the internal electronics of the radio, building generators, studying vacuum tubes and amplifiers, transformers and transmitters. He disassembled the sets, examined the intricate ganglia of tubes and wires, and reassembled them blindfolded.

Stephen Ambrose, The Wild Blue, p. 64:

He mastered the internal electronics of the radio, built generators, studied vacuum tubes and amplifiers, transformers and transmitters. He learned to disassemble a set, then reassemble it blindfolded.

Childers, whose previous books have been on German history and politics, plans to make *Wings of Morning* the first book in a World War II trilogy. He is now at work on a book about a B-17 pilot from Philadelphia who was shot down, hidden by the French, captured by the Gestapo, and sent to Buchenwald concentration camp. The final book will take up what Childers calls "the last battle"—the return home of American servicemen after the war.

Ambrose has written well-regarded biographies of Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard Nixon, but his fame as a historian has come from his enormously admired books on World War II. *Band of Brothers*, the story of an airborne company that jumps into France on D-Day and fights across Europe until the war ends, was turned into a ten-part television series on HBO last fall. What has made Ambrose's book especially appealing is his focus on the soldiers and airmen, not the generals. "He really did a lot to shift the focus away from the high commands," Childers said. "Veterans love him."

For his next book, Ambrose is researching the Pacific war, again dealing with the troops, not the brass. On his website *stephenambrose.com*, he asks any Pacific veterans to send "oral history, memoirs, diary, and/or letters home." His appeal is touching. "Veterans often say that they don't need to do an oral history because they weren't in combat or they don't feel that what they did was all that important. Well that's not true. Regardless of what you did or where you were stationed, your history is important."

Though it took a while, Childers said he was sure that "one way or another, somebody would notice" the close resemblance between his book and Ambrose's. One reviewer, Sam A. Mackie in the *Orlando Sentinel*, didn't make that link but noted the literary superiority of the part of *The Wild Blue* that relied on Childers to the rest of the book. "Ambrose is at his best" when writing about the harsh lifestyle on a B-24, Mackie commented. "But," he went on, "all such passages are surrounded by often banal prose." ♦

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Joseph & His Brothers

The man behind Margaret Thatcher's party.

BY DAVID LOWE

Just twenty-five years ago, Britain stood on the brink of economic disaster as the "sick man of Europe." One of its two major parties was chained to socialist dogma, and the other was intellectually bankrupt. It's fitting that credit for the profound transformation of the 1980s should go to Margaret Thatcher. But it was Sir Keith Joseph who did the most to bring into being Thatcher's Conservative party—as Lady Thatcher herself has acknowledged.

Keith Joseph
by Andrew Denham
and Mark Garnett
Acumen, 458 pp., $39.50

Joseph is largely forgotten today, even in the country he served as cabinet minister in four governments between 1962 and 1986. In *Keith Joseph*, the first full-length biography of the man, Andrew Denham and Mark Garnett portray him as a brilliant eccentric whose career followed a conventional path for a Tory politician: Harrow, Oxford, wartime combat, and entry into a family business. In some ways, however, Joseph was anything but conventional. For one thing, his brilliance as a student won him a highly coveted fellowship to All Souls College, an association he would keep until his death in 1994. For another, he was Jewish, and upon his entry into Parliament following a by-election victory at Leeds North East in 1956, Joseph was only the second Jewish Tory elected since World War II.

Raised in privilege, he entered British politics with a passion to eradicate poverty. But he would come to understand, as so few others of his time did, the welfare state's perpetuation of poverty, and his most significant achievement was to break the bipartisan postwar consensus that made Britain one of the West's largest welfare states. For his efforts he would incur not only the wrath of the British left but, more significantly, of many of his own party colleagues who regarded him as a dangerous ideologue.

Joseph was born into a close-knit extended family descended from German-Jewish immigrants, who agreed in the 1870s to pool their assets under an arrangement known as "The Fund" which was to prove highly successful. From his father—who turned the struggling construction company Bovis into a major enterprise, became lord mayor of London, and literally worked himself to death—Joseph inherited a hard-driving commitment to succeed. At the time he entered Parliament, the Tories were seeking to move beyond their patrician image. Although his background in some ways fit the party stereotype, the authors note that "his religion, his apparent lack of any sympathy for the landed interest, and his meritocratic outlook encouraged commentators to regard him as one of a new breed of Tories."

In 1959, Joseph had his first encounter with Margaret Thatcher. It was during her first successful Parliamentary campaign, when she invited him to speak on her behalf in the sizably Jewish North London constituency that she would represent for over three decades. Three years later, Joseph would be promoted from junior minister to head of the Department of Housing and Welsh Affairs following the infamous "night of the long knives," when Prime Minister Harold Macmillan summarily sacked seven cabinet ministers. It was a remarkably swift rise, and Joseph was hailed by the *Times* as "one of the party's progressive intellectuals."

The 1950s and 1960s were the era of "Butskellism," the convergence of the two major political parties behind the idea of a large full-service welfare state. Looking back on that period, Joseph characterized the process by which Labour governments moved the economy toward greater and more intrusive bureaucratic control, only to be ratified by their Conservative successors, as a "socialist ratchet." In her reflection on that period in her diaries, Lady Thatcher notes that

> Almost every post-war Tory victory had been won on slogans such as 'Britain Strong and Free' or 'Set the People Free.' But in the fine print of policy, and especially in government, the Tory Party merely pitched camp in the long march to the left. It never tried seriously to reverse it. . . .Taxation? Regulation? Subsidies? If these were cut down at the start of a Tory government, they gradually crept up again as its life ebbed away. The welfare state? We boasted of spending more money than Labour, not of restoring people to independence and self-reliance.

Joseph would later look back with regret on his career at the Housing Ministry, where he endorsed economic stimulation and regional planning, going along with fashionable policies that earned him the nickname "Little Sir Echo" by the Labour party's new leader, Harold Wilson. It was Joseph's first period in opposition following the Tory defeat in 1964 that would expose him to serious economic ideas, particularly through an association with the Institute for Economic Affairs, a think tank promoting free-market principles. In the 1967 speech his biographers call the opening of his "first economic crusade," Joseph took his party to task for not freeing private enterprise when it returned to power six years after the war.

The crusade would be interrupted by the Tories' return to power in 1970. This time he would have the opportu-

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nity to put his compassionate conservatism into practice as secretary of state for social services. His social welfare policies made him one of the most popular members of Edward Heath's cabinet, and he was widely mentioned as a possible future leader of the party.

Joseph, as it turned out, would never rise to such a position of prominence. Following the defeats in 1974 that returned his party to opposition, he knew the time had arrived for the Conservatives to move beyond such disasters as the failed incomes policies of the Heath government. His biographers make much of their discovery that what has heretofore been regarded as Joseph's epiphany was nothing more than a continuation of his first crusade of the 1960s. Whatever the case, this time he had a more ambitious plan, namely, to convert his party to the concept of limited government. The think tank he created for this purpose, the Centre for Policy Studies, carried on where the Institute for Economic Affairs left off by translating the theories of its economists into concrete policy proposals.

To help him in his new venture he turned to a former Marxist, conservative journalist Alfred Sherman. It was to be an association of lasting significance. Using the platform of his think tank and Sherman's aggressive advocacy of the free-market, Joseph began a tireless campaign of issuing White Papers, briefing journalists, and, most boldly, delivering public lectures at leftist-dominated universities (where he was subjected to both verbal and physical assault), in which he outlined a program of recovery that included—but was by no means limited to—Friedmanite policies of monetary restraint.

To Joseph's detractors such as Sir Ian Gilmour, the Tories were never "explicitly and primarily a capitalist party" and ideological thinking of any kind was to be discouraged. Thus, the battle lines were drawn between the monetarists and the "wets," as Mrs. Thatcher would come to characterize dissenters within her cabinet such as Gilmour and Employment Secretary James Prior following the party's return to power in 1979. In siding with Gilmour and Prior, Joseph's new biographers go to great lengths to find inconsistencies in Joseph's arguments. It's ironic that at a time when a Labour chancellor of the exchequer extols fiscal prudence and praises the role of the entrepreneur, a biography of Keith Joseph tries to resurrect the wet Tories' indictment of Thatcher's economic policies of the 1980s.

Hulton / Archive

Keith Joseph, left, stands beside Margaret Thatcher at the Conservative General Office.

Nonetheless, to their credit, Denham and Garnett do not allow their criticism to diminish their admiration for Joseph's integrity and moral courage. In describing his battles just to be heard on university campuses in the 1970s, they contrast his calm defense of economic freedom with the boorishness of those who attempted, usually unsuccessfully, to shout him down. They are less flattering when assessing Joseph's abilities as a political leader and manager (including his poor showing in both of the cabinet roles he assumed under Thatcher), but here they are on firm ground. Looking back on his career with characteristic modesty a year after his retirement from government in 1986, Joseph told an interviewer that had he been selected as party leader following the Tories' 1974 defeats, "it would have been a disaster for the party, the country, and for me." Although Thatcher would contradict that assessment at his memorial service eight years later, the fact is that Joseph lacked both the temperament and the political skills essential for the task.

He was too honestly introspective, haunted throughout his adult life by a strong sense of guilt and self-doubt. Despite all the intellectual courage he displayed during the opposition period in the 1970s, Joseph's inclination was to avoid tough political showdowns. A good example was his hasty retreat on the issue of vouchers in the early 1980s while school-related issues were under his jurisdiction during his tenure as education secretary. Though Joseph had been a strong advocate of parental choice, he reversed himself when it became clear that he would have to overcome a broad and well-entrenched opposition.

In the end, it is the force of his ideas that will stand as the legacy of this son of privilege whose radical vision helped nurse the sick man of Europe back to health. "Power," Sir Keith Joseph once argued, "grows out of the barrel of a gun. A gun is certainly powerful, but who controls the man with a gun? A man with an idea." ♦

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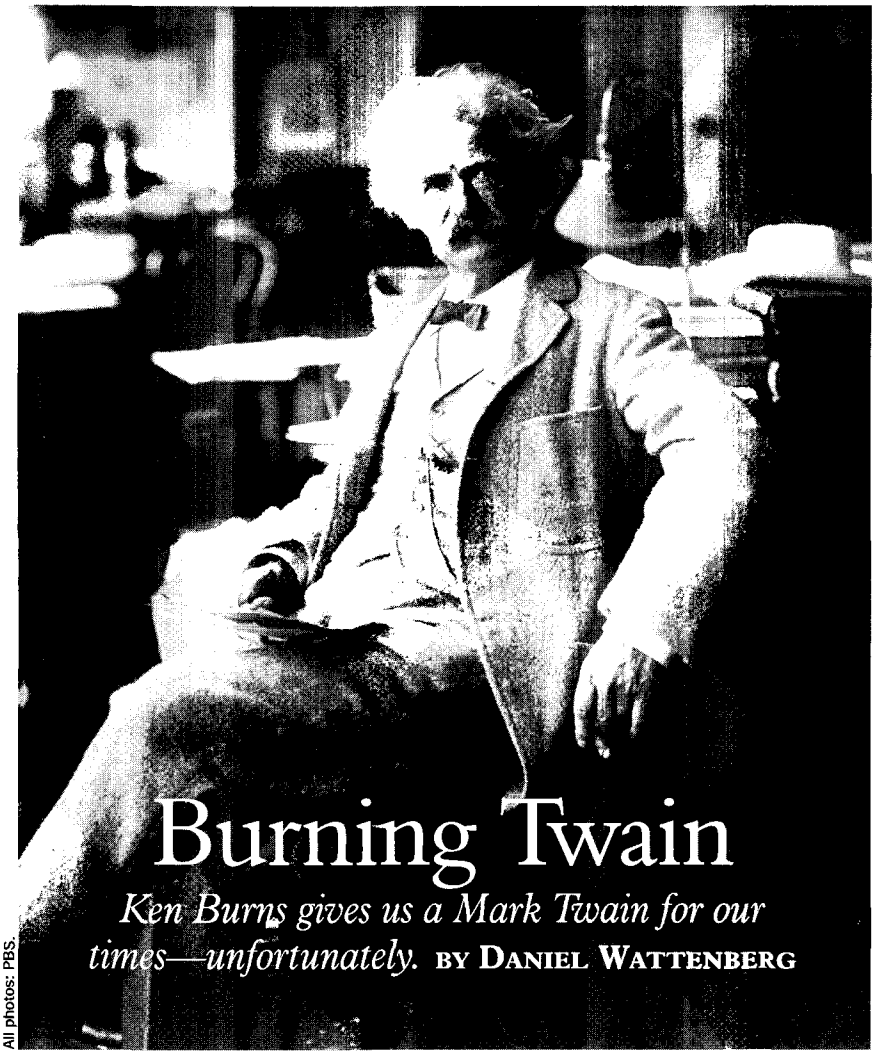

All photos: PBS.

Burning Twain

Ken Burns gives us a Mark Twain for our times—unfortunately. BY DANIEL WATTENBERG

"We are looking for subjects," Ken Burns recently said of his documentaries, "that hold up a mirror to who we are." Mark Twain is the subject of the director's latest film, a two-part special that PBS will air on January 14 and 15. And what Burns sees reflected back at him by Mark Twain bears considerable resemblance to who Burns seems to think we Americans are: high-minded, forward-thinking baby boomers—not unlike, as it happens, Ken Burns himself.

So, for example, the documentary mentions that Twain's move to San Francisco in 1864 accidentally brought him into a "great, proto-psychedelic counter-culture newspaper society." Yes, in the baby-boomer version of American history, even Mark Twain was in the psychedelic San Francisco of the Sixties. So, too, Twain wouldn't be much of a mirror of who we are if he weren't a bit depressed. Fortunately, the famously depressed novelist William Styron appears in the film to confirm that Twain did indeed have a "dark, depressive streak, which is not uncommon among writers."

Like the children of the 1960s, Twain fought racial injustice long before everybody else. And like them he was a withering critic, writes Burns in *Mark Twain: An Illustrated Biography*, the book that accompanies his documentary, "of police brutality, racism, anti-Semitism, religious hypocrisy, governmental arrogance, petty tyrants, and safe bourgeois life." Twain was "biting" about the "greed and get-rich-quick-fever" of his era. And yet, despite himself, "no one loved money and the comfort and luxury it bought more than he did." So, *so* like the children of the 1960s. It's tempting to say that Ken Burns has finally found an answer to the most pressing need of today's left: a funny left-wing social critic.

But *Mark Twain* is not actually that bad, not worth another letter-writing campaign on PBS bias. Enough politics has seeped in to give the film a detectably correct tint, but it is not enough to saturate what is mostly a pretty conventional "Great Man" portrait of a literary giant.

The problem with Burns's Twain isn't so much that he fits too conveniently into the political context of our time. The problem is more that Burns and his collaborators (Dayton Duncan and Geoffrey C. Ward) have made little effort to fit Twain into the appropriate contexts of his own day. Burns's admiration and fondness for Twain seem to be unlimited and unconditional. Whether as artist or social observer, his Twain is unique and without precedent. He is always the *first* this, the *greatest* that, and the *only* something else. How are we to gain even a general notion of where Mark Twain fits into the traditions of American literature, humor, and social criticism when Burns asks us to take it for granted that Twain *transcended* these traditions?

Whether considering Twain as stylistic innovator or social critic, to take just two examples, Burns fails to provide adequate historical perspective. Burns claims, for example, that Twain "understood that art could be created out of the American language before anyone else." It is not clear from this whether he refers to Twain's frequent use of vernacular dialogue and narration or to the unpretentious simplicity and directness of Twain's prose style. But either way, Burns exaggerates.

It is beyond question, if not exactly hot news, that Twain enjoyed command of an impressive range of dialects, like the backwoods Missouri and slave dialects of his boyhood that anchor the fabulous narrative of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in a wholly believable setting. But before Twain, Whitman and maybe even Thoreau had begun to sense the artistic possibilities of spoken, everyday American English. Both relished rural slang. Thoreau scattered fragments of conversation with local farmers throughout his journals. And Whitman urged that American literature be revitalized by words from factory and farm, from "around the markets, among the fish-smacks, along the wharves."

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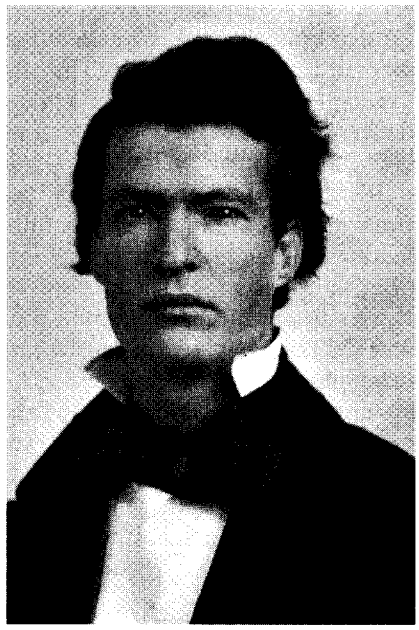
Of course, Twain went much further with vernacular language. It likely had something to do with the fact that he was less isolated than his predecessors. As a child of the Mississippi and later a riverboat pilot on the great commercial and passenger transportation route, he heard a wider variety of native dialects. And Twain went West during the Civil War (after a very brief stint in a Confederate militia, the Marion Rangers, mustered by childhood friends from Hannibal), where he was exposed to still more dialects and, indeed, a new western patois, as diverse regional dialects merged in the mining centers. Twain lived and wrote in the Mississippi valley, Rocky Mountain West, San Francisco, and finally New York and New England.

Does this coast-to-coast scope qualify him as America's first truly national writer? And if so, does his emergence as a national writer just as the nation was trying to repair itself after the fractures of the Civil War have something to do with his vast and enduring popularity and perhaps provide some background to Twain's boast, quoted in the program, "I am not *an* American; I am *the* American." (*Innocents Abroad*, which propelled him to wealth and fame, was published in 1869 and sold an astonishing 100,000 copies in two years. And in recording there his travels among the la-di-da Europeans, he accentuated what was most recognizably American in himself.)

Popular humorists before Twain also worked, often, in dialect, whether on the lecture stage or the printed page. Journalist George Washington Harris's satirical Sut Lovingood stories of the 1850s and 1860s were narrated by an uncouth Tennessee hillbilly in a dialect that Harris tried so hard to faithfully represent on the page by phonetic transcriptions and intentional misspellings that the sketches are hardly readable today. Perhaps tellingly, Twain reviewed a collection of these stories that appeared in 1867. Why did Twain succeed where Harris failed? He seems to have learned from at least one of Harris's mistakes: Sut misspelled words even though he was supposed to be



Top: Samuel Clemens, c. 1851.
Below: Mark Twain, 1870.

illiterate, while Twain would give Huck enough schooling to justify his misspellings.

Twain's penchant for tall tales, literary hoaxes, bruising physical humor, and comic contrasts between house-grown, book-learned Yankee tenderfoots and the ill-bred hell-raisers of the western frontier were all derived from a Southwestern tradition. How Twain emerged from this uncooked and unwashed style of frontier comedy, if he did, to become a sophisticated social satirist is a topic left untouched by Burns.

Indeed, a number of important critics and cultural historians have argued that Twain never did manage to transcend this tradition. He "was never the conscious artist, always the improviser," wrote Constance Rourke, in her landmark *American Humor*. "He had the garrulity and the inconsequence of the earlier comic story-tellers of the stage and tavern; and his comic sense was theirs, almost without alteration." One of Burns's "contributors," author Ron Powers, does discuss Twain's exposure in early boyhood to the local slave dialect on his uncle's farm in explanation of his later exploitation of vernacular speech. That's true as far as it goes, but it leaves unanswered the question why southern writers were actually *slower* than their northern peers to render speech naturalistically.

Twain's streamlined, uncluttered prose style was part of a broader movement among northern writers after the Civil War away from the lacy, over-decorated prose that southern writers continued after the war to confect in imitation of European models. In a famous chapter in *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain himself blamed the postwar persistence in the South of "wordy, windy, flowery 'eloquence'" on the lingering influence of Sir Walter Scott. (Indeed, Twain blames the Civil War, only half-jokingly, on the South's wholesale appropriation of Scott's gauzy romanticism, bogus ideals of chivalry, and attachment to rank, caste, lost causes, and the past.)

If instead of chalking Twain's clear style up to individual genius or virtuous lack of pretension, Burns had broadened his perspective, he might have placed it in the context of some relevant social currents of the day. In *Patriotic Gore*, Edmund Wilson notices this "rapid transition from the complex, the flowery, the self-consciously learned, to the direct and the economical"—and he links it to the increasing mechanization of American society after the Civil War and to the literary legacy of the Civil War itself, a brisk

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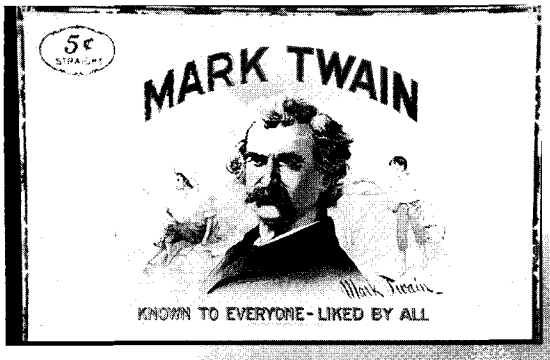

and decisive "language of responsibility" that Wilson saw as common to the styles of Lincoln and Grant. "The cultivation of brevity," he wrote, "was no doubt the result of the speeding-up of everything in American life."

It's true that Twain's language was free of baubles and ostentation, but his narratives tended to be lazily ambling (like the Mississippi itself, observes Powers in the Burns companion volume). Twain's style may have been more immediately shaped by his background as a newspaperman than by his own brief war experience, but he was not immune to the indirect effects (through other writers) of the kinds of wider changes in literary sensibility that Wilson was writing about.

In his alternately impenetrable and platitudinous preface to the companion biography (I suspect that Burns personally had little to do with the main text of the book, or it too would be almost unreadable), Burns says that part of his purpose is to show how "Twain, alone among writers in the nineteenth century . . . confronted his demons and those of his countrymen and almost single-handedly invented American literature." As powerful and important as Twain's indictment of racism and slavery in *Huckleberry Finn* was, it seems downright silly to claim that he alone among the century's writers took on America's demons. Or is it naive to think that Hawthorne faced up to demons from our national past when he wrote *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Scarlet Letter*?

Twain's daughters Susy, Jean, and Clara, with his wife Livy, c. 1883.

In showering Twain with superlatives for his fearless social criticism, Burns simplifies a complicated question. Celebrating Twain as the representative American and living embodiment of its values, Burns hints, perhaps unintentionally, at a source of the complexity: A writer cannot very well be a critic of the same national habits of mind for which he is also the preeminent spokesman and symbol, at least not at the same time. And Twain often functioned as the spokesman rather than critic. In *Innocents Abroad*, for example, he did a little tweaking of the philistinism of Americans on a jaunt to see the cultural treasures of the Old World. But he directed most of his mockery at the morally smudged decadence of Europe. He found, in Constance Rourke's judgment, "what a composite" American of his day "could be expected to find, not only that [Europe's] monuments were decayed, but that the European was a dastardly fellow for the most part, however the circumstance might arouse laughter in the genial newcomer."

Twain's *Roughing It* might be interpreted from one point of view as a devastating critique of the myth of the American frontier and its illusory promise of instant riches without effort. But at the same time, it is a ringing reaffirmation of the even older and more central American values of social Protestantism. Chiding his younger self throughout the book for laziness, lack of follow-through, and susceptibility to the lure of get-rich-quick schemes, he concludes his account of his adventures in the West with this moral: "If you are of any account, stay at home and make your way by faithful diligence; but if you are 'no account,' go away from home, and then you will *have* to work, whether you want to or not."

H.L. Mencken, who admired Twain as the towering literary talent of his day, nevertheless held in contempt the intellectual pusillanimity of the figure who was not just a man of letters but a

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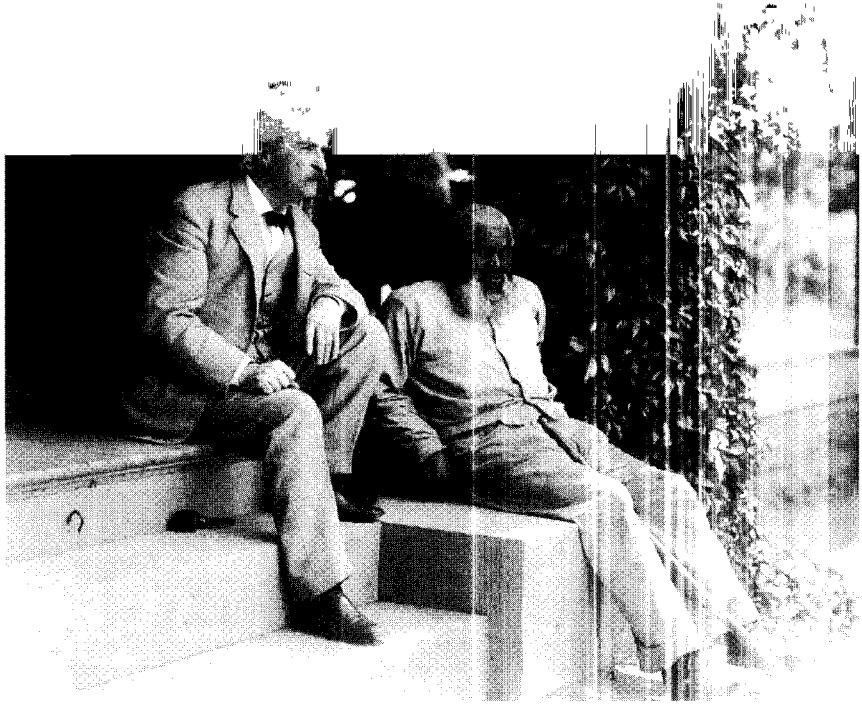
popular performer and folk hero as well. Scorning Twain's simultaneous pursuit of artistic certification by the English literary elite on one end and adulation by the American mob on the other, Mencken derided him as "monkey-shining at banquets, cavorting in the newspapers, shrinking poltroonishly from his own ideas, obscenely eager to give no offense."

Burns's film does not let Twain off scot-free. It acknowledges his many "contradictions," like his denunciations of capitalist greed, despite his own unchecked acquisitiveness. (It was an expensive trait, for he played the capitalist badly, and the resulting bankruptcy disrupted the cohesion and stability of his family for many difficult years.) But Burns so reveres Twain that even his "contradictions" are treated as good things, the humanizing foibles that make him accessible and familiar to lesser mortals. One gets the sense that these same "contradictions" would be "hypocrisy" in a writer less dear to Burns.

It doesn't diminish Twain to raise questions about his credentials as social critic. Indeed, Twain's artistry arguably declined as he grew more polemical in his angry old age. Didactic purposes make a book like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and artistry makes a book like Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Dwelling on the social impact of Twain (as Burns and company do) at the expense of his aesthetic charms has the unintended implication that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is memorable, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, chiefly as an artifact of our literary history, rather than a classic of our literature.

Ken Burns's last PBS documentary, *Jazz*, suffered from a similar tendency to view the arts in America as first and foremost arenas of racial, social, and political conflict. His reluctance to discuss literature and music on their own more or less autonomous terms seems to be a habitual fault of his films on artistic subjects. His writing partner on both *Jazz* and *Mark Twain* is Geoffrey C. Ward, a fine political historian who doesn't bring the authority to artistic subjects that he did to Burns's most famous documentary, *The Civil War*. Writers Arthur Miller and William Styron do appear in the film, but not to discuss Twain's writing. It's hard to understand why Burns limited himself to such a grave pair. He could have easily added writers closer in spirit to Twain, like Tom Wolfe or P.J. O'Rourke (although that would have cut into the air time of the actor and roving Twain impersonator Hal Holbrook).



Twain and John T. Lewis in Elmira, 1903.

Burns makes much of the distinction between the private Samuel Langhorne Clemens and the public Mark Twain. In these terms, *Mark Twain* succeeds better as an intimate emotional and psychological portrait of Clemens than a literary portrait of Twain. The saga of his wild swings of fortune—from vast riches to crushing debt, from enveloping domestic bliss to the grief and loneliness of his later years—makes for such compelling melodrama that it could be a miniseries on CBS instead of a nutritious documentary on PBS. And in hinting at deep emotional springs—his father's professional and financial failures, his own perceived social and moral inferiority to his wife's wealthy, genteel, pious, and altruistic family—Burns gets further into the mind of the man than he does into the mind of the artist.

Still, Ken Burns's *Mark Twain* is never dull. And measured strictly by his ability to translate his content into the language of documentary film, Burns is successful, although even his camera itself can be overly deferential in the way it visually mirrors Twain's words. (When, for example, actor Kevin Conway reads the passage from *Roughing It* about the approach to Carson City, the camera gradually tightens its shot of a photograph of Carson City.)

But Burns seems to invite measurement against a higher standard. He seems to have graduated from unassuming documentarian majoring in American History to *Historian* who incidentally works in a visual medium (and a historian of extravagant ambitions at that). One gets the sense from his work and his comments in the press that he has begun to think of himself as our appointed seeker of nothing less than the essence of the American spirit.

Of course, by placing Twain alone on a very high pedestal, Burns actually succeeds at isolating his subject from America. We are left with an inadequate sense of what parts of American culture Twain absorbed and reshaped. Burns has left Twain's individual genius in plain view, but his Americanness is obscured—which is an especially glaring fault in one in quest of the essential spirit of America. In the end, Ken Burns's *Mark Twain* turns *the* American back into *an* American (albeit an unusually gifted one). And that's why the documentary is only *a* Mark Twain, not *the* Mark Twain. ♦

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In 2002, America vowed to help Afghanistan recover from three decades of bloody warfare. Nobody could have predicted how effective that aid would be!

Parody

TRAVEL +LEISURE

SPECIAL ISSUE - NOVEMBER 2009

Afghanistan After Pax Americana

The vast and majestic sky spreads over the Afghan mountaintops like a blanket of galaxies, but inside Kandahar-Disney the crowds are huge and festive. Spring-breakers down "John Walkers"—blue frozen drinks made from Johnny Walker scotch and daiquiri mix. Six of these beauties and you're ready for treason. The sounds of Wet Burqa contests echo from the nearby nightclub, The 72 Virgins, with lewd young men shouting, "Show Us Your Faces!"

Buzkashi Bowl VI is but a few weeks away, and the Pashtun Phillies are heavily favored over the visiting Arab Lunatics to take home the headless goat trophy. The ancient sport has been cleaned up since animal rights activists stormed into the commissioner's office. Now the horsemen drag an effigy of Susan Sontag across the goal line.

As a sign of how much the country has changed, this year the halftime show at the Buzkashi Bowl is being sponsored by the Mazar-i-Sharif chapter of B'nai B'rith. Britney Spears is scheduled to appear with a local group, The Shoebombs.

Visitors to the new Afghanistan are often amazed by how quickly Afghans have adapted to American culture. Mormonism is now the fastest growing religion in the nation, McMullah's, a new fast-food kebob chain, dots the landscape, and all along the highways there are signs that read, "This section of road is being kept clean by: The Warlord Abdul Johnson." It has become chic in Afghanistan for tribal military leaders to have both first and last names. For the sixth consecutive year, the most popular name for girls in the country is Condoleezza.

Most young Americans first visit Afghanistan for spring break—the so-called Raves in the Caves—but older visitors appreciate the gated golf course communities that now shimmer on the hillsides. Mosque Estates has an Arnold Palmer-designed course, where Tiger Woods won the 2006 Verizon Greater Kabul Open, whereas Falcon Crest has gorgeous views of the Khyber Pass with a Chichi's, an Outback Steakhouse, and a Target nearby.

Some Afghan religious conservatives are disturbed by the influx of American culture, especially since the ACLU, the Afghan Civil Liberties Union, launched a campaign to ban prayer rugs from publicly funded sidewalks, but most regular Afghans seem untroubled by the cultural imperialism.

the weekly Standard
JANUARY 14, 2002

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Education Policy and Information

E. D. Hirsch Jr. is a professor of education and humanities emeritus, University of Virginia; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Economists say that the unequal distribution of information compromises market efficiency. Advocates of free-market school reforms such as charter schools and voucher programs should heed this important truth, as should school boards and state legislators. Without a free flow of reliable information, parents and policymakers cannot make intelligent decisions. Unfortunately, **reliable information is a scarce resource in the education world.**

Educational data exist in oversupply, but there's a critical difference between data and information. Data do not speak for themselves; they must be interpreted by teasing out the separate factors that affect educational outcomes and assigning relative causality to them. Useful analyses, dependable generalizations, and accurate interpretations of educational data are in short supply.

To those who must make decisions, it is disconcerting that so much educational data have produced so little usable information. The November 7 issue of *Education Week* reports that data on the multimillion-dollar "whole school" reform effort are inconclusive. Similarly, the November issue of *Scientific American* reports that data on the effects of class-size reduction are also inconclusive. We cannot draw dependable policy implications from these studies because the data remain ungeneralized and, in a fundamental sense, uninterpreted.

The best recent attempt to generalize educational data was offered by the late Jeanne Chall in her slender last book, *The Academic Achievement Challenge*—the fruit of a lifetime of engagement with educational research. Yet Chall's book has had a negligible effect on charter schools or state policies because its information has not been disseminated. Some thoughtful philanthropist should send thousands of copies of Chall's book to those in a position to affect policy.

One of the greatest gains in our understanding of scientific method came with the insight that data take on new meanings with new interpretations and that the best interpretations take into account relevant knowledge from the widest possible range of domains. **We need to transform the ocean of educational data into usable information on the basis of the most wide-ranging and exacting analyses.** In a field beset with ideology and politics, it is not surprising that good science is in short supply. But regardless of one's faith in markets or, alternatively, in state regulation, we still need reliable information, which means that we need really good science, not the impostor that now calls itself "research" in the field of education. Without better information we are unlikely to achieve much improvement in the quality and equity of our schools.

— E. D. Hirsch Jr.

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Want to learn more about K–12 education policy?

Visit us on-line at* www.hoover.org *or contact us to receive a complimentary copy of* A Primer on America's Schools*—11 chapters by Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

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